

JAMES LEIGH
STRACHAN-DAVIDSON

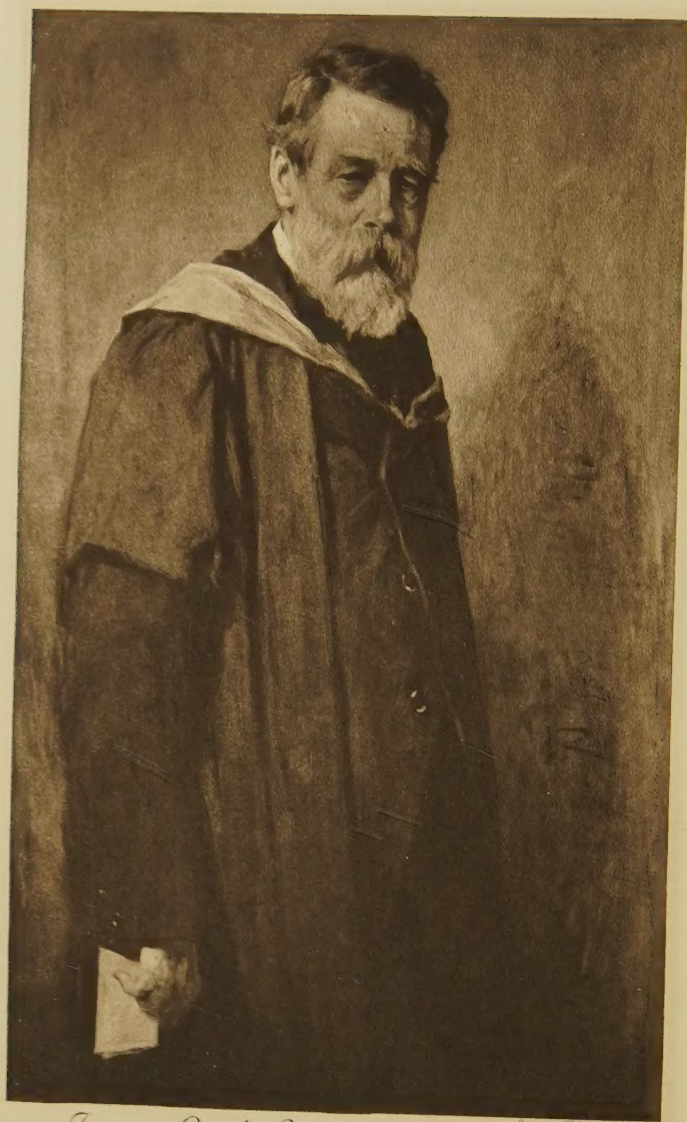
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James Leigh Strachan Davidson

Master of Balliol

1907-1916

From a portrait painted by Sir George Reid in 1912

JAMES LEIGH
STRACHAN-DAVIDSON

MASTER OF BALLIOL

A MEMOIR

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE

THIS memoir was undertaken by me at the request of the College, with the promise of assistance and encouragement. Both have been amply given. It is matter of deep regret that the late Master died while much that might have been contributed from his long intimacy and the stores of his remarkable memory was still unsecured. To the present Master and the Fellows I have to record my gratitude for their help. But neither they nor the many other past and present members of the College from whom I have sought and obtained information or reminiscence or anecdote will look for particular mention or individual enumeration. The list would be long; and the aid was given by all generously, as their share in a common task of piety and affection.

Others, not Balliol men themselves, have likewise given material assistance; and more particularly, Mr. Kenneth Strachan-Davidson, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Slack and the Rev. Austin Slack, Mrs. T. H. Green, and Mrs. J. M. Wilson. To them and to all the rest I desire to acknowledge my obligations.

J. W. M.

February, 1925.

JAMES LEIGH STRACHAN-DAVIDSON

A MEMOIR

JAMES LEIGH STRACHAN-DAVIDSON came on the father's side of an old Scottish family of repute rather than distinction. Earlier records are very imperfect; the intricacies of Scottish genealogy are great, and the intermarriages in the various families are in this case more than usually perplexing. It would in any case be needless to trace the lineage in detail to the point where it disappears in the mists of the earlier eighteenth century. What is known may be briefly summarized: it covers four generations of ancestry, beginning with Alexander Strachan of Lauriston, who married, some time before the middle of that century, Magdalene Davidson. Their son, James Strachan of Lauriston, also described as 'elder of Dundee', was engaged in commerce in Dundee. He married twice: by the first marriage he had a son, James Strachan, 'younger of Dundee'; the second, in 1787, was with Amelia, the widow of John Leigh of Northcourt in the Isle of Wight. James Strachan the younger inherited the Scottish business, and married Mary Leigh, the daughter of his stepmother. Through the Leighs of Northcourt the Strachans also counted kin with the Arcedecknes, the Groves, and the Goldies and Goldie-Taubmans.

The son of James Strachan and Mary Leigh was James Strachan the third, the Master's father, born in 1800. He pushed further out into the field of com-

merce opened up by Colonial and Indian expansion; he was 'a merchant in Liverpool and Madras', and seems also to have been engaged in trade with the West Indies and with China and the Far East, but the ascertainable facts are vague. In 1835 he was at Liverpool; in 1838 at Manilla; afterwards, apparently for some ten or a dozen years, at Madras. By a first marriage with Jane Duthie of Stirling in 1829 he had one daughter, Jane Anne, afterwards Mrs. Seymour Mowbray. In 1842 he married again; by this wife, Mary Anne Richardson of Kirby Hall in the parish of Kirkby Ravensworth, Yorkshire, whose father was an agent of Lord Lonsdale, he had three sons: James Leigh, the eldest, born at Byfleet, Surrey, 22 October 1843; George Arbuthnot, born at Madras in 1845; and William Dalrymple, born at Teddington, Middlesex, in 1847. About this time or a little later he appears to have retired from business altogether. Mrs. Mary Anne Strachan died when her youngest son was still a baby. The three little boys were left motherless, and their half-sister, born in 1833, was still but a child herself. In 1853 the father married again, and very happily for all concerned, Emily Plues, daughter and co-heiress of William Plues of Skell Field in the city of Ripon.

Soon after the marriage the Strachans removed from Teddington to Leamington. He had relations already residing there, and it then ran Cheltenham hard as a resort of retired Anglo-Indians. Mr. Strachan died there in 1867; his widow went on living in Leamington until her death in 1881, and it was the home from which the sons went out into the world and to which they gladly returned.

In 1861 James Strachan had succeeded as heir of entail to the small estate of Ardg'raith in the Carse of Gowrie on the death of the previous life-owner, James Guthrie Davidson of Dundee. Under the terms of this entail he had then to assume the name of Davidson. The addition was also adopted by the eldest of the boys as next heir of entail; his brothers retained the name of Strachan until much later. It was as 'Strachan' that he was himself familiarly known and addressed all his life by his friends, and this name will be generally used in the following pages, for brevity and for intimacy.

At the age of eleven James Leigh Strachan's name is in the lists of Leamington College as having entered as a day-boy; his brothers in due course followed him there. The College had been founded in 1844 as a proprietary school. The Head Master when Strachan entered was Dr. Burbidge; he reorganized it so as to put it more on the footing of a public school, but its fortunes were precarious both under him and under his successor, the Rev. E. St. John Parry, and in 1865 it had to be closed. Two years later it was reopened by a company of shareholders, of whom Strachan was one, and soon it entered on a prosperous career under the Rev. Joseph Wood, who was Head Master for twenty years before he left to take the Head Mastership of Tonbridge. During that period it had a fine record for the Universities and the Army. Afterwards it fell on evil days; it had never been adequately endowed, and was heavily burdened with mortgages. It could not hold its place against increasing competition of schools with lower fees and equal or greater prestige. The numbers dwindled, and in 1902 the Company was

wound up and the College ceased to exist. It is clear that under Dr. Burbidge and Mr. Parry it gave a good education. Leamington society then included a fair number of highly cultivated men and women besides the hunting people who preponderated among the residents. One of the acquaintances of those days, Lady Smythe (formerly Miss Greaves), remembers Strachan as a boy or a young man: 'I thought him interesting, very different to the usual run of hunting men', as indeed he must have been. There is little of anecdote or reminiscence to be gathered from the few survivors of his schoolfellows. He played cricket well enough to be in the College Eleven, generally fielding at point, where his long reach secured him many catches. He was not a robust boy, though beyond the normal weakness of overgrowth he was not then thought specially delicate, except perhaps in his own family, in which all athletic sports were in any case regarded with some apprehension. One of his schoolfellows, the Rev. C. H. V. Pixell, remembers that once when he was staying at the Strachans' for a match, Mr. Strachan at family prayers put up a supplication that no ball might come near him: 'I wondered', is Mr. Pixell's comment, 'where I was to field, and whether the bowlers were to send me nothing but wides!'

Time has removed most of his contemporaries, and nearly all of those whose connexion with him went back to his boyhood. Mrs. Wilson, wife of Canon J. M. Wilson of Worcester, is perhaps the only survivor of those who remember him as a schoolboy, though she was a good many years younger. Her elder step-sister, Miss Mary Talbot, a woman of remarkable

ability and accomplishment, was his lifelong and close friend ; but at her death a year before his own, all her private papers were, by her express instructions, destroyed, and the loss is irretrievable.

Of Strachan as a boy and of the family at Leamington Mrs. Wilson writes :

‘ My remembrance is vivid of his height, and his appearance of having grown out of his clothes, and of the length of his brown hair as contrasted with the close cropped heads of to-day. He seemed to my childish eyes an incomparably more interesting figure than his two younger brothers. Their mother had died when the youngest was a baby, and the step-mother, who had no children of her own, loved all three and was loved by them, but there was no mistaking that the affection between her and James was of a different degree and quality to that which characterized her relations with the two younger brothers.

‘ This stepmother was a neurasthenic invalid of great fortitude and mental energy. She was not intellectual, but she was shrewd and deeply religious. She never gave up the reins as housekeeper, though she lived on the sofa and was only lifted thence to her bed. Her husband and stepsons never wore a sock that was not knitted by her slender white fingers. She was good to look at, and, strangely enough, many people were struck by the likeness between herself and her eldest stepson.

‘ J. L. S.-D.’s father was a sandy-haired, red-faced Scotch laird whose landed property had not brought sufficient income to live upon. He had therefore gone into business and had been abroad, I think in India. When J. L. S.-D. and his brothers were at Leamington College their father had retired, and they went to the College as day boys from the modest home (first in Warwick Place, later in Beauchamp Square), where life was of great domesticity and retirement. The father’s affection for James was, like the stepmother’s, something quite beyond that accorded to the younger

brothers; this always seemed to them, I am persuaded, natural.

'I have never seen "filial piety" of the quality of J. L. S.-D.'s. As a schoolboy he would take his father out on his arm for long slow walks and return to talk with his stepmother, gathering up every point of interest to narrate to her. All this seemed so natural that I do not remember to have heard my elders comment on it. When J. L. S.-D. became a Balliol Exhibitioner it created much stir amongst his parents' friends, to whom Oxford was known chiefly as the home of Tractarianism, and Balliol (worse still) as a hotbed of Latitudinarianism.'

The Wylies of Carluke, a Scottish family who were temporarily living at Leamington as a health-resort, became intimate friends of both Talbots and Strachan-Davidsons. Caroline Wylie afterwards married Edward Caird; and when Caird became Master of Balliol, both Mrs. Caird and her sister, Miss Annie Wylie, resumed the old friendship in full. Among other connexions of the Leamington days it is only necessary to mention two other families, the Smiths and the Slacks. Ada Smith married Strachan's brother George, and between her and her brother-in-law there was a deep and constant affection. After George Strachan's death in 1902 she came to live in Oxford; she often stayed in the Master's lodgings, and hardly a day passed without their seeing each other. She survived the Master for nearly three years. Without any brilliance or special accomplishments, she was a woman whose kindness, sweetness of nature, and good sense endeared her to all who took pains to know her.

Dr. Slack was the family physician. After taking his medical degree at Edinburgh he had travelled in

Arabia, Palestine, and Egypt, where he spent a year at Cairo, before settling down to practice at home. Notwithstanding the difference of more than twenty years in age, he and Strachan became fast and affectionate friends for life; writing to a grandchild of his many years later Strachan says, 'I wish that you could have known your grandfather, who seemed to me to be one of the best men in this world'. He had marked Strachan while still at school as a boy of unusual promise: they had common ground in politics and in shooting and fishing. Dr. Slack's sons, Mr. Robert Slack of Derwent Hall, Keswick, which was their old family property, and the Rev. Austin Slack of Ormathwaite, inherited the friendship, and part of every autumn was regularly spent by Strachan with one or other of them.

Mr. Slack's recollections of old Mr. Strachan, 'tall and straight and rather florid', are indistinct. But of Mrs. Strachan they are vivid, in the later years before her death in 1881.

'She used to occupy an upstairs room which was a sort of bed-sitting room, as she was a confirmed invalid. She was hardly ever out of pain, and thinner than anybody I had ever seen. She could only speak in a faint whisper. But her mind was as active and her spirit as gay as if she had none of these ills. She always gave us such a welcoming smile that we loved to go to see her. We generally found her knitting in her bed, probably making socks or a flannel shirt for James or one of the other sons, usually a little dog named Boz by her, whom she had taught to do a surprising number of tricks.

'The relationship between James and this stepmother has made an indelible impression on my mind. If she was fortunate in her stepson, he was equally fortunate in his stepmother. There was no greater joy to her than to talk of James, and

her cup was overflowing when he came down from Oxford ; while his tenderness for her was almost like that of a woman.'

'George', Mr. Slack notes, 'was a lifelong friend of ours. Between James and George there was a very strong bond of sympathy. All his life George was greatly handicapped by asthma : he went into business for a short time but had to give it up on that account. He was a most companionable man, very fond of art, and endowed with a keen sense of humour. He used to make great fun of James's absent-mindedness, James listening with an amused smile of easy toleration.'

In sweetness of temper, in courteousness and warmth of kindliness, the two brothers were alike ; the absent-mindedness, and the disorderliness that went with it, were peculiar to the elder.

'He was always losing his portmanteau,' Mr. Slack observes, and other friends would bear this out, 'and as he usually arrived just about dinner-time there was generally some stir caused by the butler tapping at various doors trying to collect things "to fit Mr. Strachan-Davidson"—rather a hopeless proceeding, as he was a head taller than any of us. My mother would get rather fidgety for fear the dinner should be delayed and spoilt. She would anxiously ask us before he arrived if we thought his portmanteau would be lost, and the answer was always in the affirmative. But what a pleasure to us it was when he did arrive, with or without his portmanteau ! How we liked to hear that hearty infectious laugh like nobody else's on earth.'

Strachan was head of the School when he went up to Balliol in 1862, as Warner Exhibitioner. The choice of College, though obvious for other reasons, was no doubt suggested by the Head Master. Mr. Parry's father, Bishop of Barbados, had been a Fellow of Balliol, of which Parry himself was a scholar of marked distinction ; he obtained both the Chancellor's Prizes, for the English Essay in 1849 and the Latin



As an Undergraduate (1862-66)

Essay in 1850. He went by the name of 'pious Parry' to distinguish him from his contemporary 'impious Parry', also Edward, who was afterwards Bishop of Dover.

Scott had then been Master of Balliol for eight years. Wall, the Senior Fellow, was Bursar and Logic Lecturer. Woollcombe (Tay), Jowett, and Riddell were the three Tutors; Henry Smith was Mathematical Lecturer and Senior Dean. There were two Blundell Fellows, one of whom, Salter, afterwards Principal of St. Alban Hall, was Librarian. The rest of the twelve Fellows were all men of remarkable eminence; Lonsdale, a fine classical scholar, who left soon afterwards to become Professor of Classics in King's College, London; Edwin Palmer, one of the great Oxford Latinists, afterwards Professor of Latin and Archdeacon of Oxford; W. L. Newman, the most brilliant and stimulating of Oxford lecturers on ancient history; Charles Bowen, the all-accomplished, to whom the College paid the greatest distinction in their power when in 1885, in the exercise of what they pride themselves upon as their singular privilege, they unanimously elected him Visitor; and Green, of whose noble character and profound influence, whether as a thinker, a teacher, a citizen, or a saint, all mention would be superfluous. Green was Junior Fellow, elected in Strachan's first term; he only became a Tutor four years later.

It was an eminent company; and hardly less eminent in actual promise and later fulfilment was that of the undergraduates. Courtenay Ilbert and T. L. Papillon had come up two years before as Scholars; John Purves and Edward Caird as Snell Exhibitioners. In 1861

came Joseph Wood, W. H. Simcox, Matthew Ridley, and Patrick Henderson. Together with Strachan there entered Francis de Paravicini as Scholar, and just after him, Evelyn Abbott as Exhibitioner, both to be his colleagues, Abbott to be linked to him for nearly forty years by the closest ties of affection.

Balliol, like other Colleges, was smaller then ; it was still housed in its older buildings, in which no substantial change except the Basevi block of 1825 and Butterfield's chapel of 1855-7 had been made since the eighteenth century. It was more of a family than a more numerous society can be ; the eighty undergraduates, although they included wide diversities of upbringing and interest, all knew one another, and were all devoted to the College. The picture of Oxford life incidentally given a few years later in the *Oxford Spectator* is the vivid reproduction of a period which is fast passing away from living memory.

The period of the Palmerston Ministry, 1859-65, was one of quiescence and apparent stagnation, but was full of the germs of new life. Liberalism, as it was then understood, was predominant in Oxford. University reform was in the air ; modernization of studies, and extension of the sphere of higher education, were gaining ground. The beginnings of what was afterwards called aestheticism were visible. It was midway between the Oxford of *Verdant Green* and the Oxford of *Zuleika Dobson*. Balliol had completely established the reputation begun in the thirty-five years' reign of Jenkyns ; its tutorial staff were the *élite* of the University ; its undergraduates, drawn, since the opening of its scholarships to free competition, from a very wide field, with a preponderance from the great public

schools and a strong stiffening of Scotsmen, were a microcosm of their own. The College, which has never lacked a proper pride in itself, tended to be self-sufficing; there were representatives in it of all interests and pursuits. On the river and in the cricket field and in other sports, no less than in scholarship, it stood high; but in this side of College life Strachan's continued and increasing delicacy did not allow him to take an active part. Riding was, as it long remained, his favourite recreation; he was fond of shooting, as long as his eyesight served him, whether grouse and ptarmigan in the north, or partridges nearer home; he often shot with Anson at Pusey, and took special pleasure in a day or two every autumn over the stubble on the College estate of Ufton, the more endeared to him because it was near the home of his own boyhood; but he did not hunt. He read steadily rather than hard; he got his First in Mods and his First in Greats easily, and in 1864 he won the Jenkyns Exhibition in the College. While recognized as a good scholar, he had not been a very prominent undergraduate; he lived quietly, and was quietly appreciated for his qualities of courtesy and sympathy, of an almost feminine gentleness combined with inflexible standards of truth and honour. To continue at Balliol was what his own predilection and his weak health alike suggested. He was elected Fellow in 1866 after he had taken his Final Schools.

The debates of the Union then occupied a larger place in University life than they do now. There was not the modern multiplication of college debating societies; and Oxford, regarding itself as a nursery of future statesmen and administrators, fostered with

much seriousness the practice of Parliamentary arts by undergraduates. The Union Debating Hall had been built and opened in 1857; until it was replaced by the present hall twenty years later, it was a focus of much importance in Oxford life. Strachan, though precluded by delicacy of health as well as by absence of ambition from thought of a public career, took a large part in its proceedings. He was Secretary for one term in his second undergraduate year; after he had taken his degree he was Librarian, and in the autumn term of 1867 was President. In the Union records there is mention of him as having taken part between 1863 and 1867 in over forty debates. The subjects of these indicate pretty fully, even when they deal with controversies which are now only of a faint historical interest, the kind of questions which were then prominent, and the views which he had already formed on them; which were, broadly speaking, those which he retained through life. Some of them may be cited.

On two occasions he supported the cause of the Confederate States in the American Civil War. He moved a resolution in favour of the ballot at Parliamentary Elections. On the Irish Church question, then looming on the horizon, he characteristically advocated concurrent endowment; 'that the State ought to support in each district that Church which had the majority of inhabitants in that district'; and in the same Erastian spirit, opposed a motion 'that the Union of Church and State is unsatisfactory to both parties'. As regards Parliamentary reform he was tepidly progressive; speaking in favour of motions for its 'fair consideration' and for 'a moderate measure of reform', and later, of a motion to the effect that a

'generous concession' in the matter would be 'a real benefit to the Conservative Party'. In advocating the abolition of the Game Laws (1865) he was in agreement with the bulk of the Liberal Party. More startling is his support of motions then regarded as marks of advanced Radicalism: 'that the condition of the English agricultural labourers is a disgrace to the classes above them'; 'that the laws at present acting in restraint of trade combinations are unjust and mischievous'; and, in 1867, 'that the administration of Ireland requires a thorough reform', and 'that the mass of Fenians, even though misguided, are patriotic men, and that the disgrace of the late rebellion lies with England, not with Ireland'. Towards this last doctrine, indeed, the creed of official Liberalism was already verging, though it was six months later before 'the chapel bell was rung', in a famous phrase, by the Clerkenwell outrage.

In the field of foreign and international politics, the line Strachan took, then as later, was broadly speaking what was later called Liberal Imperialism. When the Schleswig-Holstein quarrel became acute, he spoke in support of a motion 'that the so-called policy of non-intervention is alike ungenerous and impolitic', and against a vote of confidence in the Palmerston Ministry. On the other hand, two years later he advocated the doctrine that 'the policy of Count Bismarck has been conducive to the best interests of Europe'; and in the next year, 'that the extinction of Turkish rule in Europe will be a gain to the cause of civilization'.

In opposing motions 'that international morality demands from England the future relinquishment of India' and 'that the circumstance of sex ought not to

be a bar to the possession of the electoral franchise', he indicated his dissent from theoretic Liberalism; in both matters the view he held then he continued to hold consistently.

But in the province of University reform and of education generally he was clear on the Liberal side: he is recorded as speaking in favour of regard being had in the choice of a University Representative to character and attainments, not to adhesion to a party creed; of compulsory reforms being effected in our Public Schools; of urgent need for a large measure of University Reform.

What is interesting is that on only one occasion did he speak in a literary debate; though it should be borne in mind that then as now such debates were but rare. On that single occasion the motion he supported was 'that George Eliot is the greatest English novelist of the present century'. She was then at the height of her vogue; except for *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*, which came in the next decade, her novels had all been published. Even so it is strange to find him (perhaps under some external influence) prepared to assign so high a place to her; and apparently giving her precedence not only over Dickens and Thackeray, over Charlotte Brontë for whom he had not, and Mrs. Gaskell for whom he had, a great admiration, but over the two great planets to whom afterwards he never wavered in his allegiance, Scott and Jane Austen. It was only some years later that George Eliot made the acquaintance of Jowett and became a frequent visitor at Balliol.

For several years after his election to a Balliol Fellowship his health was very precarious, and he had

to spend the winters, and often a great part of the year, abroad in climates which were better suited to his lung trouble. The winter and spring of 1867-8 were spent in Madeira; the next winter at Cannes, not very successfully; and the two following winters in Egypt. This was at Dr. Slack's advice; it was a resort at first adopted rather reluctantly and as a compromise for the sea-voyage round the Cape to Australia which had been prescribed, but it was one to which he became afterwards much attached. River-life on a dahabeeyeh was in those uncrowded and leisurely times a real enjoyment; and on his first journey up the Nile he had the luck of good company in P. F. Willert, C. W. Mills, and a new acquaintance with whom he often travelled afterwards, Greville Chester, a man of great *bonhomie* and sweetness of temper, a competent archaeologist, and the possessor of a wonderful flair for discovering and acquiring small antiquities such as Arab glass lamps, Egyptian scarabs, or Greek and Roman coins. Of these last Strachan in the course of years formed quite a considerable collection, as all his pupils will remember, for he liked nothing better than showing them and discoursing on them to any intelligent pupil. The collection was bequeathed by him to the College and, in accordance with his wishes, lent to the Ashmolean Museum after his death. It is now there. It consists of between 1,500 and 1,600 coins, Greek and Roman. It is particularly strong in the Macedonian and Ptolemaic sections, but also includes a fine selection of Imperial Roman coinage. The greater number of the coins were acquired by him in the course of his many visits to Egypt; a good many in Italy or Sicily. He was

particularly fond of the beautiful tetradrachms of Alexander the Great, of which the collection includes many fine and some rare specimens; he often gave one of these as a present to a friend, or to a friend's wife or daughter, though not unconscious that its probable fate was then to be made into a brooch. A more detailed account and appreciation of the collection may be found in Volume XX of the fourth series of the *Numismatic Chronicle* (1920).

In the winter of 1872-3 he went to the Cape; by that time his health was so far improved that he was able to take an effective part in College work, though it is only in the *Calendar* of 1874 that he appears as Lecturer in the list of Fellows.

No letters of his belonging to these years are known to be extant. But there are a few written to him which are of interest; one or two from contemporaries who were, and remained all his life, close friends, Francis Le Marchant, a fine scholar and able financier, who later was a member of the Indian Council, and W. J. Courthope of New College, who was a year senior to him; a considerable number from another close and lifelong friend, P. F. Willert, who had come up from Eton to Balliol in 1862 but migrated to Corpus two years later. When Willert came back to Oxford as Fellow of Exeter after four years' Eton mastership, the intimacy was drawn still closer. Willert's daughter Dorothy was Strachan's godchild, and after the Willerts went to live at Headington, a walk up the hill for Sunday luncheon there (very often after a stroll and talk with R. W. Raper in the garden of Trinity earlier in the day) was one of the most frequent of his quiet enjoyments.

More interesting still, in the light they throw on the Oxford of those years, and the politics both of the country and of the University, are half a dozen long letters from Conington during 1868 and 1869, the last written a few days before his death in October 1869. Strachan was then in Egypt; and a letter to him from Courthope about Conington's death adds 'he was very fond of you'. The affection is strongly marked in these letters. The influence of Conington in Oxford, particularly among the younger men who were Liberals in politics and reformers in University and College matters, was very great. These letters are written with an entire absence of reserve and with the freedom of intimate conversation. Conington was a more advanced reformer than Strachan, even in the enthusiasm of youth, ever was; and in particular, he disbelieved in what was to Strachan an *articulus fidei*, the College system. 'What I should like', he writes to Strachan in July 1869, 'would be to sweep away the Colleges entirely and start fairly with a fresh University'. His fresh University would be purged of Toryism and all elements of reaction: 'Convocation Elections', he says with some heat, after Bonamy Price had defeated Thorold Rogers in a contest, fought on almost purely political issues, for the Chair of Political Economy, 'are brutal things'. Under the new Statutes of 1877 the appointment to this as to other Professorships was transferred to a special Board. The Chair of Poetry is now and has for many years been the only one to which election is made by the whole Governing Body of the University.

Conington's extreme conscientiousness, and his well-meant endeavours to be a director of youthful genius,

did not leave room in his nature for any touch of humour. His pained comments on the satirical poem, *Ludibria Lunae*, published by Courthope in 1869, like his insistence on the duty of a College Tutor to have a moral influence on his pupils, sound a little over-anxious. A wholly opposite temperament was that of one who, notwithstanding, was a close friend of his, Henry Smith, who took life, as he wore his immense learning, lightly. Strachan was his devoted admirer, and got nothing but good from him. He was already Savilian Professor of Geometry when Strachan came up, but remained a Fellow and Mathematical Lecturer at Balliol till 1873. Then he migrated to Corpus, but remained a much loved member of Balliol Common Room.

In 1872 Francis de Paravicini, that fine scholar and erratic instructor, who was also an institution of the College during the thirty-six years following, returned to Balliol after having been for some five years a Senior Student of Christ Church. To see him and Strachan walking round the quad together, like a crane and a jackdaw, was a thing not to be forgotten. Even as an undergraduate Paravicini used to vex the soul of the authorities by his irregularities, especially in attendance at chapel and at Divinity lectures. He and Strachan were once up together before the Master at Collections. Woollcombe proceeded to give his account of them; he began by a general eulogy of Strachan's industry and meritorious behaviour; then with a sudden change of tone went on, 'But when, Master, we turn to Mr. Paravicini, what a —tay— difference do we find!' As he proceeded with the catalogue of Paravicini's enormities, Scott's face turned from

benignity to darkness; Strachan himself, and the other men who sat waiting their turn, could hardly compose their countenances.

To W. L. Newman, Strachan owed much. Many Balliol men must remember how often in lectures would come 'Newman used to say (not the Cardinal) that'—with the little half-explanatory and half-deprecatory cadence on the parenthesis. When Newman became permanently invalided and retired to Cheltenham in 1870 it was not thought he had long to live, far less that he would outlive all his contemporaries. On his rare and brief visits to Oxford afterwards it was in Strachan's rooms that he would be found. He survived to the age of nearly ninety. At his death he had been Scholar and Fellow of his College for no less than seventy-two years, a period which covered not only the three score years and ten of human life but many successive revolutions in the history both of the College and of the University. He was the last but one of the Scholars of Balliol who, under a privilege soon afterwards abolished, were elected Fellows before taking their degree. He was the inspirer, and very largely the originator, of a new historical school in Oxford. It was his lectures in ancient and modern history which kindled the interest and shaped the studies of Creighton, Dicey, and Pelham, as well as of many others of less eminence.

With all his other colleagues Strachan's relations, if less intimate, were equally cordial. For Green he had a very warm feeling. Nettleship, that remarkable intellect, always puzzled him a little; and in later years some of his younger colleagues puzzled him in a different way; for his reactions to new ideas and

methods were not rapid, and his tendency was towards regarding them as speculative theories not meant or suited to be put in practice in the College. He was apt—too apt sometimes—to take for granted that his own views and principles were shared by others, and that differences would be easily adjusted if only the others would be sensible. Of bitterness of feeling, as of heat in the language of controversy, he was incapable. These were not the weapons of a gentleman. Some extant letters, too private, perhaps, even now for publication, show what no one who knew him will need to be shown, his patience under unfair attacks, and the courtesy by which he disarmed antagonism and restored amity. The hardest thing he was likely to say of an opponent was to call him, smilingly, an owl; oftener it was ‘poor dear ——’.

With youth he was always in sympathy; and to the failings of youth, its follies, its petulances, its extravagances, he was always indulgent. It was only to conduct which indicated falseness or baseness of character that he could be severe. An incident trivial in itself may be recollected here as characteristic. I was with him once, after he became Master, when a visitor was announced: it was the mother of an undergraduate who had got into trouble with the College by conduct which, to Strachan’s mind, was indefensible in a gentleman. The change that came over him was subtle and instantaneous. It showed itself in nothing more tangible than an accentuation in him of the perfect courtesy which he always extended to women; but the temperature dropped, as one might put it, to something only a little short of glacial. This was all in a minute; for within a minute I had left

them by themselves ; and I did not gather afterwards what the upshot of the interview had been. He had a natural dignity which was so inherent and so unconscious that it seldom if ever required to assert itself, least of all in the exercise of his official functions ; *nec decanus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus* might have been a motto of his had he thought of such things. An undergraduate once threw a stone, by some error of judgement or of aim, which went through one of Strachan's windows. The Dean's face appeared at the window with a thundercloud upon it. But on receiving the confused apology which was tendered, he simply invited the culprit to dinner. Outbursts of boyish destructiveness such as occur in a College from time to time he was ready to forgive or to palliate, except when they were directed against the trees and shrubs in the Garden Quad. These he could neither forgive nor forget. The lime-tree on the lawn opposite the Hall steps, which is of his planting, replaces another planted by him on the same spot, which was destroyed one evening by a group of men who had dined well rather than wisely. He was really angry then. He mourned over its fate almost as if it had been a child ; as he did over the beautiful gum-cistus which he had placed against one of the buttresses by the New Common Room, when it succumbed not to human violence but to an unusually severe winter. Once some other young rioters had trampled down a quantity of spring bulbs planted and just come into flower under the big elms. Next morning Strachan was regarding the havoc with deep indignation, when Forbes came up and had the happy inspiration to observe, '*And then his heart with pleasure fills, and*

he dances on the daffodils'. Strachan's brow cleared. 'Mighty good!' he exclaimed; 'it almost makes the outrage worth while'.

His closest and most beautiful relations were with Evelyn Abbott. Abbott had come to Balliol from Clifton the year after him, almost equally distinguished as a scholar and an athlete. The injury to the spine which left him physically a helpless cripple for life is too well known to need recalling; as is the strength of will, the patient heroism, with which until his death at the age of fifty-eight he bore his heavy burden, produced a large amount of able work, and was a strength to the College. All his brother Fellows Strachan regarded as brothers in the full sense; but he might almost be said to have mothered Abbott. 'I used to feel when I parted from them', Mrs. Sellar wrote in her delightful *Recollections and Impressions*, 'that I did not know which I admired most, the splendid pluck of the one or the noble unselfishness of the other'. The sight of him walking by Abbott's invalid chair round the Parks was almost a daily one in term-time; and they spent much of the vacations together, both in Oxford, and at Sunningwell, or at the cottage on Headington Hill, from which a specially built pony-carriage took Abbott to and from Oxford; or at Clifton with Miss Talbot or Miss Alleyne, or at Leamington while Mrs. Strachan lived; and even, more than once and with no little success, as far away as Shap in Westmorland with its health-giving air and moorland scenery. As time went on, too, Strachan came more and more to lean on Abbott's great wisdom and soundness of judgement.

That was the fast friendship of half a lifetime.

Later begun and briefer, but not less affectionate, was his attachment to another colleague, Sir John Conroy. Conroy came to Balliol from Keble as Lecturer in Science in 1887, and was made a Fellow three years later. The two had much in common; width of interest, sweetness of temper, social qualities and habits. 'He was not a man who changed much,' one of his friends from undergraduate days at Christ Church wrote after Conroy's death, 'always the same simple, genial, and entirely modest fellow, a perfect gentleman and a true, loyal friend.' In that respect the two were alike.

From the time when Strachan became able to take a regular part in the government and teaching of the College, his life was concentrated on Balliol, and his biography, so far as there is one, can hardly be kept distinct from a chronicle of College history. He had many friends beyond that circle, in Oxford and out of it; but Balliol and its members were wife and children to him.

The decade which accomplished itself with the Royal Commission of 1877 was one, in Oxford generally and in Balliol particularly, of movement and vitality, of large expansion and liberation. As early as 1865, the expiration of the probationary year of Ilbert's Fellowship—he had been elected in 1864—turned the scale in favour of Jowett, who came out of his tent, and by 1867 is described as 'to all intents and purposes Master'. The epoch of the Waterhouse rebuilding and extension began. The new front quad was completed by 1868, the Master's house by 1870, the new Hall in 1876. In 1869 Jowett wrote exultantly, 'Students are now to be allowed to lodge out,

which will enable them to come to Balliol instead of going to other Colleges. If we had a little more money we could absorb the University.' In September 1870 he became Master, and his control of College policy was, if not substantially increased, stabilized. Tests were abolished in the University by Act of Parliament in 1871. But meanwhile the reformers of the sixties were insensibly becoming the Conservatives of the eighties, and beginning to be alarmed at the results of their own past action; as early as 1874 Jowett wrote, in words which fifty years later sound curiously premature, 'I hope we shall save Greek in the Universities'.

The banquet of 15th January 1877, when the new Hall was formally opened, marked the culmination, and in a sense the conclusion of that period, and the opening of another, less dramatic in incident but equally solid in achievement, which extended to the death of Jowett in 1893. Throughout this latter period Strachan was Senior Dean; he had been appointed to that office in 1875, having been until then a Lecturer only. In 1876 his original Fellowship expired and he was re-elected as a 'Fellow on the Tutorial List'. As Dean he was president of the Common Room, and acting Head in absence of the Master. He habitually spent part of the winter in Egypt; often the Christmas vacation only, with some short extension at the end of the Michaelmas Term after the Scholarship examinations were over, and sometimes a further extension for a week or two of the Lent Term. But he was from time to time obliged, when his health was worse or the English winter more severe than usual, to obtain leave of absence for the whole of the Lent term: this was so

in 1875, 1880, 1882, 1886, 1890, and 1891. He acted as Vicegerent during Jowett's illness in 1887 and again in 1893.

During those long, quiet middle years of his life, he became more and more a mainstay of the College, an institution, a figure without whom it seemed hardly possible that Balliol could exist. To say that he won the affection of all his pupils would be an understatement; it had not to be conquered, for it was the instinctive response to his own qualities of constant kindness, high courtesy, delicate consideration, abounding hospitality, eagerness to gain and swiftness to respond to affection. Mrs. Sellar's words may perhaps be quoted once more, where she speaks, as she had good reason to know, of the 'gentle and faithful heart that has smoothed the path and cheered the lives of so many of his friends'.

His lecturing work, as distinct from more general tutorial supervision of men reading for Greats and from his share in taking weekly essays from men in their first two years, was mainly, and after a time exclusively, in the field of Roman History. Earlier, he also lectured on the *Republic*, and according to the rather slight evidence extant, very effectively. These lectures dealt principally with the political aspects of the work, and were much on the general lines of Newman's Introduction to his edition of the *Politics*. He preserved his notes for them for many years, but they have now disappeared. Professor Burnet, however, has some recollection of their scope and contents.

'Strachan lent me his notes for *Republic* lectures', he writes, 'when I was reading for Greats. I gave them back to him when I had done with them. I know that I thought them

extremely good at the time, and I still believe they were so. Strachan himself was evidently rather proud of them. I remember that he was particularly good on Book I, as might be expected, and that though he seemed to be less interested in the central books, as might also be expected, he had nevertheless an extraordinary grasp of the argument as a single and continuous whole.'

Of his quality as a lecturer on Roman History there was divergence of opinion. Some men, not dull themselves, found these lectures, one is told, dull; and probably as the years went on they lost a certain amount of their freshness, without the compensating gain in clarity that might have come of revision and compression or expansion. The men of my own generation certainly found them interesting. They will remember the frequent flashes of witty illustration. One may be quoted. He was discussing the problem of Pompey's sphinx-like silence during political crises. To all Pompey's contemporaries, whatever party they belonged to themselves, it was equally disconcerting. By some it was attributed to his frigid hauteur, by others to some deep and inexplicable design. Strachan cited, as a simpler explanation, the story of the savant who wanted to solve the problem of the language of monkeys, and returned, after a long sojourn in the forest, with the report, 'They don't talk, because they have got nothing to say'. It will be remembered too how many phrases picked up at these lectures became College catchwords—*vel intra pomoerium vel extra pomoerium*, and '*paludatus* on a white horse', the typical description of Strachan himself when he went out riding in his mackintosh on a showery afternoon. More largely it can be claimed for them that they were always human

even when they enlarged on minute details or on constitutional technicalities ; for the men, Gracchus, or Caesar, or Cicero, or Tiberius, with whom he was dealing were to him living people ; and he made them so for all the best of his pupils.

But it was in his own rooms, taking essays or going over work, that he showed his qualities and exercised his stimulating power most fully. As we matured into senior members of the College, intimacy grew ; the recollections of those evenings are among the most vivid and delightful of all college memories. The two lamp-lit rooms—electric lighting with all its advantages has taken away one of the benignities of common life—were a strange muddle of incongruous furnishing, crowded with books and papers on table, chairs, floor in unspeakable confusion ; even his meals there were taken at one end of the long table in the second room on a scrap of surface salvaged from the overflow. The kettle was always on the hob in the evening, and the tray set out with tea-cups and the big heavy Indian silver teapot ; tea-drinking began at any time after ten o'clock and went on until midnight. The long lean figure of Strachan, unbuttoned, many-waistcoated, often collarless, with feet thrust into big yellow Arab slippers, would be found either writing on a few inches of cleared table or stretched in the battered easy-chair of brown leather by the fire ; generally smoking. In those earlier days he used to smoke an Egyptian pipe with a three-foot stem of cherry-wood and a bowl of red clay ; but more generally and more continually cigarettes which he rolled himself ; not well, for neither in this nor in other matters was he very neat-handed. Yet for those who did not make their own cigarettes he had a touch of

indulgent contempt; and when his colleagues in the Common Room once gave him a silver cigarette-box, they took humorous note of this by engraving on it *Non sibi sed amicis*. The gigantic pouch of fine-cut Turkish tobacco was always conspicuous on his table. A shy undergraduate who had come to see him one evening picked up this pouch and was proceeding to take it away with him under the belief that it was his own cap, when Strachan luckily noticed and courteously retrieved the mistake.

To read essays to him, whether the weekly Mods essays on a wide general range of subjects, or the more specialized Greats history essays later, was always a pleasure if one had taken pains and really worked up the subject. A quotation from *Peter Simple* (a book which he almost knew by heart) or from *Rejected Addresses* was a sure road to appreciation; not less, one from Scott or Miss Austen. His taste in literature was old-fashioned, and changed but little if at all.

It was in the later seventies and the eighties that the central and I think the happiest portion of his life may be placed. Mr. P. E. Matheson's recollections of that time will recall it vividly to many contemporaries. There had been some slight acquaintance between Strachan and Mr. Matheson's family through common friends, 'but I did not get to know him till I came up as a scholar in Michaelmas Term, 1877, when I was given rooms on his staircase, on the floor above him, with a window in the gable looking down Beaumont Street to Worcester.

'Evelyn Abbott was my tutor for Mods, but I think my weekly essays during that first year were taken to Strachan-Davidson. I have little memory of this time, but I know that for Mods and Greats essays alike he had the gift of making the writer feel uncomfortable if he had taken little pains; he

had an exacting standard for style and matter, but his criticism on both was constructive. In the second year my Greats work had begun and he was now formally my tutor. I went to his Roman History lectures and took him essays on the subject and, I think, also on Political Economy. I remember taking essays with J. A. Hamilton (now Lord Sumner) and with Tatham. He was exacting, as I have hinted, and disliked slack work, and I remember once, certainly, he made us write on the same subject again when he thought we had missed the point. On the other hand he was generous in praise and encouragement. His lectures interested me and I attended them regularly : looking back I think they perhaps emphasized the purely constitutional side a little too much ; but this applied less to his lectures on Cicero's *Letters* and Tacitus' *Annals*, where he had more scope to deal with the wider human issues. He dearly loved a nice constitutional point, and it was natural that in lectures on limited texts he was apt to dwell on details, but he certainly conveyed to us two things—a sense of the dignity of his subject and of the importance of weighing evidence. He was always accessible to his pupils and made them at home in the comfortable disorder of his study, with tea and cigarettes for any who liked them, and a wilderness of books about him from which he managed to extract the one he wanted at the moment. With Strachan-Davidson's lectures one began to see what were the foundations on which the accepted histories were based. His handling of Bruns's *Fontes* took us into a new world and showed us a sound method, building up the story of the Constitution from fragmentary texts. His studies in legal and political history and his monograph on Cicero taken together show how erudition and scholarship are compatible with lucid and sometimes brilliant writing.

‘When I returned to Oxford in 1882 to keep my year of residence as a Fellow of New College [Mr. Matheson had been elected Fellow while a master at Fettes, an appointment which he obtained on Strachan's recommendation] he was as kind as ever in advising me on future plans, and when after temporary work at Balliol and University I settled

down as lecturer and afterwards tutor at New College, I saw him pretty often, and my friendship and work over Demosthenes with Abbott made another point of contact. For some years I went to dine in Balliol generally once a week, and when he was there he was the host and centre of the Common Room. For many years he spent the winter in Egypt, which gave a sort of romance to his life in our eyes, but in later years he found he could do without it and we were all the gainers from his continuous residence here. In term time one would meet him going round the parks with Abbott, or at tea with Abbott on Headington Hill: in vacation I have memories of seeing them both in lodgings at Hedderley's on Boar's Hill and at Mr. Deane's farm in Sunningwell.

'In 1885 I joined at his invitation a Tutors' Society, of men of "liberal" views in University politics, which met twice a term (we entertained in turn) to discuss topics of University interest. He always came in the summer term, but fought shy of going out on winter evenings. Among the early members were J. Magrath, T. W. Jackson, Alfred Robinson, T. L. Papillon, E. Talbot, and Tait (these had left Oxford before I joined), Thompson, who rejoined as Warden of Radley, Arthur Sidgwick, Moseley, Morgan, Clark the Jesuit, and Napier; and among later members Bourne, York Powell, Macan, Goudy, Miers, Wylie, J. A. Smith (the death of Nettleship in '92 and Alfred Robinson in '95 made great gaps). When he was there he was always a large part of the meeting. The Society represented the old-fashioned Liberalism of Oxford. He was by temperament and conviction a Whig, with a strong sense of constitutional government: in University affairs he was friendly to research but would not make a fuss about it. I do not think he had much interest in natural science, and he had some distrust of metaphysics, though he had a great belief in the study of the *Ethics* and *Republic*. He was a delightful host when he was in the vein, whether he was entertaining a private party in his own rooms, or the Ambarum or the Tutors' Society in the old Common Room. He planned his table well and had the art

to keep things going. He had something of the gravity of the Don, and his face was apt to look sad in repose, but his sense of humour and his keen interest in men and affairs, his store of ready quotations (for his memory was tenacious) made him in days of sunshine and good health a delightful companion. His belief in the School of Greats as a training for men, and in the Civil Services at home or in India as the best of careers, made him at times inclined to overlook other aspects of Oxford life, but when he spoke in Congregation he always did so with distinction and was always listened to with respect. As he went little into Oxford society and had been much abroad he had not always a very sure knowledge of University opinion, and in his own studies perhaps lost something by not mixing more with other scholars, but he was one of the most inspiring lecturers on Roman History: less in contact with exploration and digging than Pelham, narrower in range than Warde Fowler, but an enthusiast for constitutional theory, with a keen sense of politics and political capacity, he conveyed to us with an individuality and a fine interpretation of his own the traditions of the Oxford school of ancient history, which he had received from W. L. Newman. We felt he was a man who understood politics and human life.'

Throughout the seventies Strachan regularly spent the main part of the Long Vacation in the extreme north of Scotland, a region to which he became deeply attached.

'In 1870 or 1871', Mr. Robert Slack writes, 'my father rented the lower half of a small river called the Dionard, or Grudie, in the north of Sutherlandshire. In the long vacation James invariably came with us. On the way up we frequently stopped for the night at Perth, and James would run down to Dundee to inspect a small property which he had there, going on to Lairg next day. From Lairg it was a fifty-six mile drive in the mail cart to Durness where our fishing was. The mail cart only ran every other day and started at the early hour of seven o'clock in the morning and the still earlier hour of 4.30 a.m. on its return. It was a wild treeless land, peat,

bracken, and heather, with great boulders of granite scattered about—the highest of the hills rising to about 2,000 feet above the sea level. The population was very sparse and miserably poor. James loved this uncivilized land, with its interesting coast and magnificent air. It seemed to suit him wonderfully, notwithstanding that the living was rough and the inn very primitive and rats very numerous! Indeed I remember Dr. Wood, then Head Master of Leamington College, afterwards Head Master of Harrow, who was one of our party, announcing one morning that there were rats in his bed. We thought that he was exaggerating. Said he, "Come and see". That night he led the way, candle in hand, followed by James and my father to his bedroom. Suddenly he tore off the sheet and we all saw a big rat scuttle into a hole in the wall near the pillow of his bed. "Sit on it, Wood", shouted some one. "I daren't", he said. But how did he dare to go to bed? "Well," he said, "I just put my mouth to the hole and say 'Go away', and it goes away!" But the rats were not our only cause of complaint—the food was coarse, and the chimney of our one sitting-room smoked. The bread, which came from somewhere south of Lairg, seemed to be made chiefly of alum. Not only was the cooking bad, but they were so long in producing what they did cook, that we nearly fainted with hunger, so ravenous were we with that keen air. Well did Wood write of Betsy, the parlourmaid:

Schooled by the everlasting hills
To scorn the lapse of time.

But James took these matters like a philosopher. After our first year conditions improved. The innkeeper died, and the rats were exterminated, while the food was supplemented from home.

'It was a six miles' drive to the river. At first we used to make an early start, but gradually the poor people round about got to know that my father was a doctor. Most of them had never seen a doctor in their lives. Fortunately he had brought his medicine chest with him, thinking that in those

remote parts it might be of some use. It was rather exasperating, nevertheless, to those who wanted to be off fishing to see a collection of people waiting at the inn to see my father. However, James came to the rescue. He volunteered to be apothecary, and so saved much time, weighing and measuring the drugs, which he did with a good deal of skill. I believe that if he could only have weighed and mixed his drugs in the fresh air, he would have preferred doing so to fishing, for, if the truth must be told, he had not the instinct of a fisherman. He was always getting his line in a hopeless tangle, and when some kind friend had helped him to get it free, and he had duly expressed himself grateful, and made a sort of oriental salute, he next caught his hook in the bracken, or, worse still, in a rock in the river. All the same he flogged the water most perseveringly, and I think for some time he must have had good hopes of getting a salmon. I remember on one occasion seeing him step from rock to rock, and making for a very commanding one almost in the middle of the river. I knew nothing about fishing, but, I thought, surely if he gets on that rock every fish in the river will see him. However, he got there all right and mounted the rock ; but he had not made more than two or three casts when he over-reached himself and fell flat into the water. Fortunately, it was not deep ; but I shall never forget his woebegone appearance as he scrambled out. Of course it was a serious thing for him, with his delicate lungs. But still there was nothing to be done but wind up his reel and tramp six miles home. However, he took no harm ; and I think it must have been some source of satisfaction that he had got so strong and well in the fine Durness air that he could tumble into the river with impunity. He never really acquired the knack of casting a fly properly during the years that he went to Durness. No doubt it was a difficult river to fish, with high banks and bracken in which to catch the fly of the unwary ; and after all he was not the only one of our friends who drew blank. I remember on one occasion when he had been fishing all day without success he went to watch my father who at once invited him to take a

cast with his rod. Whether he tried to make an extra good cast, or whether his foot slipped, I don't know, but not only did he hit the water with the rod but the bottom of the river too! Of course, snap went my father's cherished rod. Only a fisherman knows what that means. My father rapped out, "Why James, you might just as well walk into the river with your mouth wide open and try to catch salmon that way!"—a suggestion which afterwards afforded them much amusement! However, James's experiences on the Grudie were not lost; for he told me long afterwards that he used to go to some place in Scotland where he had quite good enough sport with the trout when his sight was not good enough for the gun. But at Durness he much preferred shooting to fishing. We had a kind neighbour there—the Rev. E. Otto Trevelyan—who often used to ask us to shoot. There were sufficient grouse to make it amusing and a few ptarmigan on the tops of the hills. James was mighty keen, and was a good shot. He worked very hard with the gun, but no matter how tired he was when he got back to the inn, as soon as the long-delayed tea was finished, and the first cigarette consumed, he would become immersed in Polybius by the aid of a guttering candle—the little room getting dimmer and dimmer from peat and tobacco smoke.

'The last time James went to Durness was, I think, in 1879; I did not go after 1877. Of the friends who came to stay with us there I remember George Strachan coming two or three times, and also Dr. Wood, who was a great friend of both James's and my father's. It was to James that Leamington College owed a debt of gratitude for having Dr. Wood as head master. Pupils of James's also came to Durness. M. G. Glazebrook, now Canon of Ely, I particularly remember, and Eustace Corbet, afterwards a judge in Cairo, and a lifelong friend of his.'

Mr. Matheson gives a further reminiscence of the last two of these autumn holidays.

'He showed his kindness in inviting me for a month in the

summers of 1878 and 1879 to the inn at Durness, in Sutherlandshire, where for many years he spent part of his "Long" in reading and mixed sport, fishing and shooting alone or with friends. In '78 his other guests were Arnold Toynbee, then busy reading Miss Martineau's *History of the Peace*, and F. C. Montague, and in '79 J. W. Mackail and A. C. Clark. He was a capital host, saw that we did some steady reading but did not press us hard, and helped to keep the company going with plenty of good talk of his sport and his varied memories of the place, and of his other travels, and of the books of his choice. Then indeed and later there were days when his body irked him and he became subdued and sad, but these were exceptions, and I can recall his hearty laughter over his own stories, which he told as though he loved them, and over any that his guests could offer, to which he gave a hearty welcome. He paid for my journey to the north, and persuaded me to go by boat from Hull to Aberdeen the first year, but even gratitude could not induce me to do it a second time. Scenes from those days come back to one: the adventure in the Cave of Smowe (which Scott once explored with Stevenson of the lighthouses), when our host rescued Montague from the mysterious waters of the cavern into which he had slipped from our boat; the August afternoon up the valley, when he and I tackled the midges which were attacking Mackail, while he played a strong sea-trout on a light rod and line; and a day on Foinaven after ptarmigan; and a long tramp he and I took once up Strath Dionard to visit his old friend Dr. Slack, who was living in a shepherd's hut in the wilderness and fishing the stream. These two holidays, which were a great boon to me, brought me close to him and gave us common memories, which we often recalled later.'

Arnold Toynbee, that highly gifted and lovable man who, in his short life, effected little less than a revolution in thought and in practice as regards social problems and the economic life of the community, had been in 1876 appointed Tutor to the Indian Civilians

in probationary residence at Balliol. With his other remarkable qualities, he had a rare power not merely of talking freely to all with whom he came into contact, but of making them talk as freely themselves; and a lightness of touch, a bubbling spring of humour, which made exchange of thought as easy with those who differed from him as with those who agreed with him. Brought up himself in the straitest sect of Ricardo, Strachan never perhaps fully realized the bearings of the new political economy; but he had not here at all events a closed mind. Not only on economic and social matters, but on all subjects, he fell under the happy spell of Toynbee's personality, and talked and wrote to him more freely than to most others. One letter, written from Cairo in the early spring of 1878, has been preserved and is worth giving here.

Hotel du Nil, Cairo.

February 23, 1878.

MY DEAR TOYNBEE,

Many thanks for your letter. I am delighted to hear that you are flourishing. The extra stone of weight is a great fact and I hope is an indication of solid and permanent improvement. My Oxford correspondence has been limited to yourself and Willert, but between you I feel pretty well posted up. The double account of the 'Palmerston' feed is most amusing, and I think I shall preserve the documents by way of illustrating the difference between the enthusiastic undergrad and the cynical College Tutor. He agrees, however, with you in cordially admiring Milner's speech. I think I should have been on the same side, though I am not sure. I have always been indignant at the impertinence of these miserable Turks in venturing to say 'no' when a European conference said 'yes'. Now if in so doing they had only risked their own lives and their own Empire I should not much have minded,

but then they have also risked what is much more important, our interests in the East. For this reason I think the English Government ought to have taken from the first the line that the Turks are not fit to judge for themselves. They should have said, 'You shall not go to war with Russia, you shall not take up a position which will render such a war inevitable. If you do we will knock Constantinople about your ears.' If this had been done there would have been no war. Supposing that opportunity missed, I think the next thing to be done would have been, directly war was declared, to occupy Egypt, and as soon as the Russians crossed the Balkan, to occupy Gallipoli, not with a view of helping the Turk, but as a material guarantee: so that we might have said to Russia, 'If you take territory in Asia we keep Egypt. If you continue to hold the Bosphorus we continue to hold the Dardanelles. As to the valley of the Danube, settle that with Austria.' Now it is too late; if we were to take Egypt now without holding Gallipoli Russia would never be got out of Constantinople. As it is, I suppose we must submit to see Armenia pass to Russia and without compensation. I think if we were to hang Dizzy and the Editors of the *Telegraph* and *Pall Mall* there would be some satisfaction. Of course we could not have taken Egypt and Gallipoli on these terms without deeply vexing their dear Turks, and in the latter case probably storming a fort or two. There now, I did not mean to spin you a political yarn—but you ask what I think about the occupation of Egypt, and I can only say 'a great opportunity missed'—I feel grumpy on the subject.

I am very glad you have seen Miss Talbot; I knew you would like each other. I wish she would improve in health, for she is a rare and admirable character. Unfortunately she is one of those intense people who never had the art of taking things easy, and on such people all troubles external and internal take a very deep hold, especially if they have strong wills and insist on battling with things to the last.

Since I arrived here I have been doing little but read Political Economy. I am in the middle of Lord Overstone,

and have read two volumes on the Theory and Practice of Banking by a certain Macleod, who I fancy must be the father of an infant-like exhibitor who has just become a pupil of mine. If he doesn't write better English than his father, he and I shall quarrel over the weekly Essay. However, the book is very interesting: it is written from the mercantile lawyer's point of view, and assumes that everything in Economics must be just what the Lord Chancellor or the Court of Q. B. have declared it to be. The most interesting part is an historical account of the various crises; I only wish there were more of it. He has some gross heresies, as that 'Credit is Capital', but in some respects he is a curious antidote to Bonamy Price. Alas, as is usual with me, I see the difficulties and the weak points so much more clearly than the solution. If I can get sufficient light I may perhaps write a paper on Macleod and Price, but the number of 'open questions' seems rather to increase on me. I am afraid I shall have to read the book of a certain Tooke who is talked of with great respect by all the swells, and yet who answers the question, 'Will not the variations in the quantity of the circulating medium affect prices?' 'No.' What next, indeed!

There are some rather interesting people here of the name of Loftie. Both husband and wife write in the *Saturday*. Mrs. Loftie takes a great interest in what she calls 'Domestic Economy', which seems to be a mixture of Economics, Sanitary Laws, and useful information generally applied to daily life. As to the wages question she rather startled me by saying that she thought something like the ancient guilds was the true solution; but I am not clear that she understood what she was saying. In the meantime, as she is a very pretty and lively Irishwoman, one easily forgives any slip in logic.

When you write again please mention how Abbott is: I am always anxious to hear about him and he is a bad correspondent.

Now goodbye. Please give my best congratulations to the

new Fellow of B.N.C. [this was Richard Lodge]. I have a line from Glazebrook promising a letter in the future.

Yours sincerely,

J. L. STRACHAN-DAVIDSON.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Loftie remained fast friends with Strachan; for many years he was seldom in London without going to see them, and he delighted in introducing younger members of the College—the present writer was one—to acquaintance with a couple who were in their different ways wonderfully accomplished and very attractive.

The changes made at Oxford as the result of the Royal Commission of 1877 had largely satisfied reformers while not alienating conservatives. The expansion effected by University Extension, by grouping of College lectures, by the foundation of the first two Women's Halls, and in a thousand other ways, gave vitality and elasticity to a period of general prosperity and concord. While attaching itself more and more by links to the larger outer world, Oxford still retained much of its self-contained quality, and had not become choked in suburbs and something like a suburb itself. Balliol prospered. After the heavy and irreparable losses which the College suffered by the death of Green in March, 1882, and Toynbee just a year later, there was a long time without any further break in continuity.

Strachan's health was in these years fairly good. In the early spring of 1887 he varied his foreign travel by visits to Cannae and Cartagena in order to satisfy himself by actual inspection with regard to the geographical problems connected with the scenes of

the greatest Roman disaster and the most brilliant Roman success in the Second Punic War. The next year the first volume published by him, the *Selections from Polybius*, appeared. It was the fruit of long and minute study patiently pursued, and a valuable contribution to Roman history both in military, political, and constitutional developments. It lacks, as his work generally did, the higher constructional quality. The prolegomena and appendices are much of the nature of dumped material, and the whole volume, useful as it is, is certainly cumbrous. The terms used by him of Polybius in his preface might be applied to himself—and indeed the minds of the two men had a good deal in common—‘We shall not find in him the depth of thought which characterizes the great masters, nor the delicate sense of style and language. But we have the record of a man of sense and experience.’ Style indeed was an acquirement which he never mastered, nor did it greatly appeal to him in others. His own he quite complacently described as jog-trot; so long as he made his meaning clear, he took little interest in beauty of expression; and I do not remember him ever criticizing that of his pupils, so long as it was grammatical and made their meaning fairly clear.

Whether, or how far, this absence of a fine sense for style and rhythm in his own writing, and to a large extent in his appreciation of literature, was connected with his equally marked lack of ear for music might raise an interesting argument. Instances of either gift without the other are common. But in him the absence of musical sense was very marked; it went about as far as anything could short of congenital tone-deafness. After he became Master, he regularly attended

the Sunday evening concerts in Hall which had been initiated by Farmer at Jowett's instance in 1885. Before then he seldom if ever went to them; and then he did so as a duty rather than as a pleasure. They had become an established College institution, and he thought it incumbent on him to follow, as Caird, who was almost equally unmusical, had done, the tradition of his predecessors. He got some enjoyment out of pieces with a strongly marked rhythm, and would nod his head in time with it; beyond that, music was to him, like speaking with tongues, 'not for edification'; instruments were 'things without life giving sound'; to the singer or player, to continue St. Paul's phrase, 'he was a barbarian', and the singer or player 'was a barbarian to him'. He professed to be able to recognize only two tunes: 'God save the Queen' (as he always went on calling it to the end of his life) and 'Tom Bowling'. Sometimes he would turn round at the end of a piece and say, 'Mighty pretty; what is it?' Yet what appealed to him as 'mighty pretty' was generally good; often it was Mozart or Beethoven or Schubert. The first movement in Beethoven's violin concerto he always identified as 'the tune he liked', though he could never remember what it was.

He was not, in fact, an artist; and this was one reason among others why to write a book—for a book is a work of art—was very laborious work for him. But even the articles which he wrote from time to time were slowly composed and cost him much pains to get into anything like shape. Of these the principal ones to be noticed are (1) two on Polybius, one in *Hellenica*, the collection of essays on Greek poetry, philosophy, history, and religion published in 1880

under Abbott's general editorship ; the other in the *Classical Review* for December 1889, containing some interesting remarks on the theory and practice of translation ; (2) two long and elaborate articles on the legislative powers of the Roman Plebs in the *Historical Review* for 1886 and 1887 ; and (3) a number of articles on Roman constitutional law and practice contributed to the third edition of Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* in 1890-1. Mention may also be made here of a useful little edition of the first book of Appian's *Civil Wars* which he published in 1902.

In these years, however, he was engaged on another book, a study of the life and times of Cicero. This was undertaken at the instance of George Haven Putnam, who had become an attached friend to him and to Balliol. Major Putnam had visited Oxford as a young man as early as 1863 ; he made Willert's acquaintance then or soon afterwards, and through him, that of Strachan and of Abbott. For nearly forty years, up to the outbreak of the war, he used to be in Oxford regularly every spring, and Strachan was always his host. In his *Memories* published in 1915 the veteran American, who is still with us, speaks of the Master as ' now my oldest friend in Great Britain ', and he goes on, in words which it is a delight to quote, to dilate on Strachan's

' exceptional tolerance in retaining an affectionate regard for a man whose views on a number of important matters, theology, British politics, the higher education of women, &c., he believes to be seriously heretical. Notwithstanding the Master's deferential courtesy and his extreme consideration for the feelings of the other fellow, it is very evident that his own opinions are held with full earnestness and firmness

of conviction ; but with a man like him, difference of opinion is not permitted to interfere with friendship. He is not only a scholar of conviction and an executive of large experience and infinite conscientiousness, but a high-minded fine-natured gentleman, and the best possible representative of a type that helps to make the reputation of Balliol, of Oxford, and of Britain.'

Putnam had an admiration equally high for Abbott, to whom he turned over the general editorship of the Heroes of the Nations Series which he had already embarked upon. Abbott's influence, he notes with truth in the volume of *Memories*, on all his associates including Strachan was valuable not only for suggestion and co-operation, but for temper and atmosphere.

Strachan was at once put down for a volume in this series. After a good deal of delay and much laborious re-writing, it came out towards the end of 1894 under the title of *Cicero and the Fall of the Roman Republic*. It was a book that gave him real pleasure, as well as pains, in writing ; and the attraction of the subject stimulated him to a grace of treatment more than usual if less than Ciceronian. There had been a violent reaction against the idolatry of centuries. Cicero's reputation had suffered, partly from stress laid on his patent weaknesses and his innocent vanity, partly from the very width of his accomplishments ; still more, from that exaltation of unscrupulous strength which had spread like a poison through the nineteenth century as its earlier beliefs or enthusiasms faded. Mommsen had treated him with savage contempt ; and the example had been bettered by the army of Mommsen's pupils and followers. To place Cicero in a truer light, truer because more sympathetic and more

really intelligent, was a task worth undertaking, and this volume performs it well. Henry Butcher, writing to Strachan after it had appeared, said generously and truly of it, 'It seems to me *first-rate* work; I know no such fair and enlightened view of the man'; he might have added, of the Constitutionalist patriot.

Jowett's death in October 1893 was an event for Balliol of grave import. The College as it stood was, both materially and spiritually, very largely his creation. His connexion with it had been uninterrupted since before the accession of Queen Victoria. He had been its Master for twenty-five years, its guiding and governing influence for much longer. It had grown under him to be a great nursery of scholars and statesmen, of teachers and administrators: *quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris*? If the time was over when he had reigned as unquestioned autocrat, if the new generation regarded him more critically and showed some signs of restiveness under his rule and were not disposed to acquiesce in mere registration of his decrees, the respect and deference with which he was regarded were as great as ever. The choice of his successor was an anxious problem.

Had it lain with old members of the College, their decision would have been overwhelmingly for Strachan's appointment. He had won, and kept, their regard and affection. He spoke their language; he shared their tradition. He was (setting Newman, who was a confirmed invalid, aside) Senior Fellow. He had been a Tutor for more than twenty years, and Dean for nearly twenty. His whole life was devoted to and wrapped

up in the College. Expression is given to what was a very widespread feeling in a letter to him a little later from a contemporary and close friend in the Civil Service :

‘ I thought of writing to you in November, but I came to the conclusion that probably under the circumstances you would sooner possess your soul in patience than be obliged to write about what must I fear have been at the time somewhat of a distress to you. You had all our wishes here with you on private and official grounds. My own disappointment was the deeper because I had never thought there could be any but one man in. When, however, I saw the result of the first meeting I felt pretty sure as to the course which your magnanimous spirit would dictate to you.’

On the other hand there was not only the fact that his health made continuous residence during each winter uncertain. There was the feeling that a more energetic and progressive policy was desirable than was likely to commend itself to his growing conservatism. There was the consciousness that his *élan vital*, never strong, had grown sensibly weaker. Years afterwards, one of his junior colleagues makes a significant note. ‘ When we held meetings in his study and my mind wandered from the business in hand, I used to glance round his shelves and made the curious observation that while up to the early eighties they were full of the latest works, in English, French, and German, on ancient history and political economy, there was a sudden stop at a definite date. I often speculated on the mental revolution of which these shelves told the tale.’ To speak of this as a mental revolution is perhaps a little beside the mark; but that such a thing should be said or

thought is nevertheless significant. He did not change. But others did. The world about him changed, and he was not always willing to recognize the fact, still less to act upon it. In the Head of a College this is an important matter. The habit of autocracy—of secrecy, as it has been more pungently described—which had grown on Jowett, the taking action on his own responsibility and then presenting his colleagues with a *fait accompli* for their inevitable if reluctant acquiescence, was not one towards which Strachan had the slightest tendency. But he had a sort of gentle obstinacy which on occasion could be somewhat similarly disconcerting to those who had set their hearts on some new departure, or who felt that *stare super antiquas vias* was an insufficient maxim for a world of expansion and reorganization. The conviction grew that the interest of the College demanded some accession of strong new life, and more particularly, one which would make good, so far as that was possible, the loss created by Nettleship's tragic death in the previous year.

To this it may and perhaps should be added that several of his colleagues, while not less devoted than he to the interests of the College, took a different view from him as to what this devotion implied. They wished more leisure for the pursuit of their own studies and researches, less concentration on preparing their pupils for the Schools, a pursuit of knowledge more for its own sake and less for ulterior ends, however valuable. To them he seemed to regard the College too much as an end in itself; they felt, if they did not say expressly, that an imposing row of Balliol names in the Class-lists, a high place on the river, and a

maintenance in strength of the Public School—or as it might be called, the aristocratic—tradition, were aims which it did not satisfy them to pursue, and to which at all events they were not disposed to give up their whole lives. Strachan belonged, in temper and outlook more than in actual years, to an earlier age than theirs. Further, it was part of his creed that Fellows of the College should dedicate—he would not have said, should sacrifice—their whole life to the *augustum commilitium*; and this creed if logically followed out would result in what they felt to be a sort of servitude, approaching the *perinde ac cadaver* of the Order of Jesus, but without the weight of a religious sanction behind it.

To Strachan indeed himself it was a religion, and one against which he could not easily realize, still less sympathize with, any recalcitrancy. It meant for the teaching and governing staff of the College a large amount of self-abnegation, and even a certain suppression of their own activities and impulses. It meant that their life apart from the College must be largely in abeyance except during the vacations—this indeed was one principal reason for his anxiety to preserve the Long Vacation intact and his dislike of the encroachments increasingly made on it by Extension meetings, conferences, and other activities extraneous to College life as such. It meant abstention from any active share in party politics; though, with human inconsistency, he tried to make out that maintenance of the legislative Union with Ireland was beyond party politics, and that he was himself justified in speaking and writing on the Unionist side; while the Home Rule Bill of 1893 was passing through its stormy career, he published a

strongly—for him, almost violently—worded letter in *The Times*, and contributed a long signed article to the *Oxford Times*, against it. It meant, in later years, grave disapproval of any adherence to the doctrines of Socialism, still more of any propaganda, within Balliol or outside, in their dissemination or support. It meant, broadly speaking, the claim for observance of a standard of conformity. By departure from this rule, he believed, College Tutors gravely injured their own usefulness; and they not only put a strain on the intimate fraternity which was the essence of a College, but endangered what was their first duty and their highest privilege to promote, ‘the prosperity of the College, committed as a trust to our hands’.

So too, the devotion which Balliol claimed from its Fellows was something more than this. The College was to be wife and children to them. In the academic Liberalism of Strachan’s earlier life, one outstanding aim had indeed been the abolition of anything like the old semi-monastic life. But it is possible, in this as in other matters, to hold both of two contradictory principles, and not to pursue either to its logical conclusion. The married Fellow, for long after the time when a Fellowship was *ipso facto* vacated by marriage, remained an exception rather than a rule. Strachan wished it to remain so. His attitude was much that of St. Paul: ‘He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world.’ A College Tutor could not serve the College effectively and completely unless he lived in College in constant touch with his colleagues and accessible to them and to his pupils at all hours of night and day. A College in which a

large number of the Fellows—perhaps even all beyond the slender statutory minimum required to be in actual residence—lived a mile away and only came in to College, as though to an office, for certain hours, was incapable of performing its functions fully. The depleted High Table was a symbol of a weakened and finally a dislocated confraternity.

And so, each successive occasion when a Fellow, particularly if he had not established any claim to special consideration by serving at least as long as Jacob served for Rachel, announced his intention to marry, was to him a disappointment and a vexation. His assent would be given but half-heartedly: 'let him do what he will; he sinneth not; let them marry'. 'Bailey and Davis mean to commit matrimony' is a note in his diary. Once the thing was done, he bore no grudge; to the offender there was no diminution of cordiality; and the accomplice was received, not merely with the courtesy Strachan uniformly extended to all women (not least if they were young and pretty) but with the warmth of welcome due to them as having married into the family and become members of it.

The experience of one of the disappointers may be quoted as typical:

'Six or seven months', Mr. A. J. Toynbee says, 'after I had been elected Fellow'—that was of course very unusually soon—'I was faced with the problem of announcing to the Master that I was engaged to be married, and, with trepidation, I went into his study one morning and made an appointment to see him at five o'clock that afternoon. Meanwhile, the news of my engagement had reached A. L., and he at once took the crisis in hand. After lunch I found myself walking with A. L. towards Water Eaton in order to hear

a nightingale in a wood and discuss how the rews should be broken to the Master. It soon appeared that the nightingale had not been heard for four years, and that if we completed our pilgrimage to the wood where once it had sung I should be very late for my appointment, but my protest was brushed aside. "It will do him good! It will do him good!" said A. L. By about half-past five it had been arranged that we should go straight to the King's Mound, as the Master was expected there himself at 5.45 and would no doubt turn up, though hardly in the best of tempers after waiting for three-quarters of an hour for me to keep my appointment. But A. L. said that he would break the news himself. As we approached the King's Mound from the north, we saw the Master coming slowly up the road from the other end, in his hat which was a cross between a top-hat and a bowler and his pepper-and-salt tail coat, with his back bowed and his hands clasped behind it. I was hustled out through the garden into the Master's Field, and my last vision was that of A. L. greeting Strachan with one hand and motioning to me with the other that the coast was now clear for me. A few hours later I presented myself again at the King's Mound to hear the result of the interview. "What did he say?" Why he said "Damn! I knew by his face in the morning that he had something unpleasant to tell me!"

'Much later, I heard from another Fellow of the College that the Master had said to him casually—long before my escapade was suspected—that he hoped that both Bob Gibson and I (the two junior Fellows, aged respectively twenty-three and twenty-two) would be crossed in love. If tutors were crossed in love at an early age, they settled down and devoted themselves to the College. Benevolent though he was—and human kindness was perhaps the quality of his that most impressed itself on younger men who had the good fortune to be his colleagues—I do not think it would have been possible to make him understand what an inhuman wish he had uttered. After that, I felt that we were quits.

'However, he reconciled himself to my marriage, and I can

remember how, when he first invited my wife and me to dinner, he insisted that she must be dressed in white as a bride. This royal command—for it evidently was a royal command and there was no question of disobeying it—caused some consternation, for my wife's bridal dress had been cream-coloured and not white, and there was less than a week until the dinner-party. There was some feverish dressmaking, but she duly appeared in white on the appointed evening, and was rewarded, for the Master was particularly charming to her—as he could be to young women, and in fact to all sorts and conditions of human beings.

‘He asked me once, with his usual kindness, how I liked some rooms in College into which I had just moved. I did not much like them, and was just beginning to say so, when he remarked that he had lived in them for thirty years. I shall never forget how abashed I was and relieved that I had checked myself in time. I still do not think that the rooms were attractive, but then hardly anything that was part of Balliol could appear unattractive in the eyes of a Master who was also her lover from first to last.’

The preponderant judgement of the Fellows, after grave consideration, was that Caird, the most distinguished representative of those philosophical and ethical studies for which Balliol was traditionally celebrated, should be invited to return to his old College as its head. Once this was clear it became Strachan's single-minded object that the election should be both unanimous and cordial. That it was a disappointment to him to be passed over, it would be affectation to deny. No single word or gesture of his allowed his disappointment to appear. It was not in him, in any circumstances whatever, to sulk or be spiteful; this need not be said. But he went far beyond an attitude of negative acquiescence. From

the moment of Caird's election, Strachan placed himself unreservedly at his side as the most loyal and helpful of colleagues. To renew the intimacy with Mrs. Caird which had begun in their childhood was a great satisfaction to him. Caird's ideals for Balliol were no doubt different from his own, as were his political doctrines and sympathies. But no divergence, even when during the South African War it became acute, brought a cloud over their mutual respect and confidence. Two letters, one to Caird before, the other to Mrs. Caird after, the formal election in November, are eloquent of much. On the second it may be noted that if Strachan did not answer a letter the day he received it, the chances were that it became submerged in the chaos of papers with which his tables and chairs and floors were covered, and in which he had a fixed belief (the triumph of hope over experience) that he knew his way, and that any sorting or tidying would be fatal.

Balliol,

November 13, 1893.

MY DEAR CAIRD,

Thank you very much for your kind letter. I trust that you will not think it possible that any cloud could come between you and me. I can say truly that I regard you with all feelings of reverence and affection, and our last talk about our dear friend the Doctor [Dr. Slack] made me feel very tender towards you, a feeling which I think you will also have experienced. I may mention by the way that I had entirely forgotten that the subject of the Mastership was mentioned on that occasion (as I gather from a letter of Bradley's); my mind was full of the more intimate subject of our conversation.

Personally there is no man under whom I would more readily serve, and I am sure you will believe that only on

grounds of public policy I would have allowed myself to be put up in opposition to you.

Now, the same public policy demands that we should work heartily together, and this will be rendered the easier by my sincere affection for you. I promise you my hearty allegiance and loyal co-operation.

My kindest remembrance to your wife, whom I must try not to call 'Carrie' any longer—it would not be decent. It is very pleasant to think that our long friendship will now enjoy the opportunities of constant intercourse.

I see that I have not mentioned (which is true) that so far as personal comfort is concerned I much prefer my present place. I should have accepted the Mastership as a sacrifice which I was bound to make to the College, and am thankful that without any responsibility of my own I am relieved from taking up this burden.

I will let you know when the formalities are complete so far as we are concerned. Then yours will begin with a journey to the Visitor, when I hope to accompany you bearing the letter of presentation under the College Seal.

With all earnest hopes for your prosperity and that of the College under your rule,

I remain, ever yours sincerely,

J. L. STRACHAN-DAVIDSON.

P.S.—Perhaps I should add that on the day when the election is announced I shall invite the Undergraduates to drink a Grace Cup with me before dinner in Hall to your health and that of the College, and shall make a little speech the burden of which will be that no one can come to know you without learning to love and revere you.

Saturday Night.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have been meaning for several days to answer your most kind and generous letter; but to say the truth it got mislaid among a lot of others and I did not like to write without

having it before me. To-day I have unearthed it, and reading it over again it confirms my conviction of the warm and true heart which I have known ever since I was a child of nine years old. In speaking to the College on the night of the election I ventured to refer to you, as well as to your husband, as an old and dear friend. I hope that you will not disapprove of your name being brought in on an official occasion.

I trust that the renewal of our friendship by the opportunities of more frequent personal intercourse will be a blessing to the lives of all three, and that we shall all work together for the good of the College, and enjoy the sight of its continued prosperity to the end of our lives. It is no easy task that we have in hand.

I hope the Master will be able to come South before long ; there is a great deal to tell him with regard to the proposed memorial to Jowett, but it is too long to write. I attended a meeting at the Speaker's on Thursday on this matter. Likewise a committee was appointed to-day—the Master, Hardie, and myself—to confer with the executors and literary executors. There is delicate business connected with the writing of a life of the late Master, and it will be best explained *viva voce*. Many thanks to you both for all your kind utterances. It is a comfort to feel that you, my old friends, have confidence in me and are convinced that I have tried to act straight through all these complications.

With kindest regards to the Master,

I remain, yours affectionately,

J. L. STRACHAN-DAVIDSON.

The 'delicate matter' alluded to in this last letter gave him a good deal of trouble. The provisions of Jowett's will (as may be read at large in the Appendix to his Life) were complicated by a codicil appointing 'literary executors' with large but somewhat uncertain powers. There were difficulties, and even warm disputes, as to the hands in which the preparation of

Jowett's Life should be placed. The proposals to entrust this task to Lord Bowen, or to him and Lewis Campbell jointly, had to be dropped. Another plan for its execution by Campbell and Abbott jointly under Bowen's supervision was rejected: Bowen declined to take the responsibility of supervision, and Campbell refused to be supervised. Finally, by Caird's and Strachan's joint efforts, an agreement was come to between the College and the literary executors. Four years later the two volumes of the Life by Campbell and Abbott appeared.

Pullen's Cottage on Headington Hill had by this time been taken jointly by Strachan and Abbott, and much of his vacation time was passed there. But autumn visits to the Slacks at Derwent Hill, the Finlays at Aberlour, and others were regular. In September 1895 he had a rather serious illness which involved an operation in London. His recovery was satisfactory but slow, and after it he had to give up some of his College work, including the 'police duty' at night in College, which was taken over by the Junior Dean; 'it is not for gravity to be out of his bed at midnight' was his own happy quotation. Conroy, though his own health was already failing, was appointed to act as Senior Dean in Strachan's absence.

Many material changes were going on in the College. Electric lighting was gradually installed throughout. A telephone was daringly placed in the porter's lodge; and a concession was made to modern habits by the advance of the Sunday dinner hour from six to seven o'clock, and another to economy (for the old spacious days were nearing their end) by the institution of Sunday breakfast in Hall; the Sunday breakfast

parties which had been a distinguishing and a very delightful, if sometimes extravagant, feature of College life thus becoming a thing of the past.

The shortening of the weekday chapel services was another matter which gave him much concern, less on its own account than as it might give the enemy occasion to blaspheme. His own religion was simple; he seldom if ever spoke of it, and it remained that of his boyhood. After he became Master, he initiated the practice, followed since by his successors, of reading the First Lesson himself at the Sunday services, and choosing the Lesson that he read. The choice was generally from such books as Job and Wisdom, or a passage containing some tragic or heroic story. A great favourite with him was the Catalogue, in the Second Book of Samuel, of David's mighty men, with its Homeric cadences and its atmosphere of high chivalry, opening with the Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains, and ending on Uriah the Hittite. Another was the epic romance of Abimelech, with the fable of the trees who went forth to choose a king, and the death of the great condottiere under the tower of Thebez. But in ecclesiastical matters, where he was frankly Erastian, his attitude was such as Gallio's might have been had Gallio been brought up in a Christian family. There is a well-known story, the authenticity of which can be vouched for, of an undergraduate, the inheritor of a famous name, coming to him with a confederate to ask formal relief from keeping chapels or from any substituted duty on the ground that it was an unjustifiable interference with conscientious beliefs or disbeliefs. Their tactical position seemed to them excellent. An easy

assent would be a triumph over authority ; a refusal coupled with threat of disciplinary measures could be worked up into a case of religious persecution ; to rouse a serious argument would itself be a striking success. To a choice between these alternatives it was hoped by the two ingenious young men to reduce the Dean. He heard the spokesman put their case ; was silent for a minute or so ; and then with a sweet smile, said : ' No. We have all our little crosses to bear ; and this is your cross.' No more was said ; and the undergraduates withdrew, defeated.

From the end of 1895 onwards the diary note-books which Strachan scribbled in and took about with him are extant for several years. Many of the jottings in them are characteristic. The first entry of all is particularly so for those who knew him well ; it is an elaborate list of the ship's officers and the fellow passengers on the voyage to Egypt and back that winter, with their names and short descriptions of their appearance. He had a wretched memory for names and faces ; to distinguish one Balliol undergraduate from another was an endless labour for him, and there were some couples, not to the ordinary eye specially alike, whom he never ceased to mix up. Some of the identifying notes in this list, and in others later, are very amusing ; generally they are in only a few words. One family : ' Barrister ; shortish, dark, comical-looking ; mother, deaf ; sister, small, dark, lively ; aunt, plump and good-humoured '. Another, a mother and daughter : ' pleasant but not interesting ; crowded up Richards and me in railway carriage : Miss —— rather pretty, light hair and fresh complexion '. ' A short, stout American with thick moustache ; wife, light-

coloured, small, regular features'. 'Tall and thin—great hawk nose—between Arab sheykh and Don Quixote'. On the voyage home Phil May came on board, with a friend of his: 'both got drunk'.

Rennell Rodd, Clinton Dawkins, and Eustace Corbet were all stationed in Cairo that winter, and it was full of English. It was then too that he first met Lord Cromer; they took to one another at once, and made plans for Windham Baring (then a boy at Eton, 'good at salmon, bad at Latin Prose') to come to Balliol, but this arrangement did not take effect. The question of degrees or diplomas for women was rather acute during the following months, and in July Strachan went to Cambridge to a joint conference on the subject. The autumn was pleasantly spent with his brother George at Downton, in Scotland shooting, and with the Slacks at Derwent Hill, where Abbott also was; by the end of the following winter Abbott's new house in St. Cross Road was completed and the Headington cottage was given up.

At a dinner of Balliol men that summer where he spoke as principal guest, he enlarged on the flourishing state of the College and on his own ideals for it.

'As to the present state of the College I can give you good tidings. We have had heavy losses—a Balliol without Jowett and without Nettleship seems to have lost its main props. But we have tried to remember that they built not for their own lifetime only but for posterity, and that we can best honour their memory by continuing their work. We have closed the gaps in our ranks and our company is still solid and still keen for the fight. Just let me say a word about our new Chief. You entertained him last year, and I think that even from one evening's intercourse you will

have gained some impression of a really great personality, of a representative of our great College of whom we may be justly proud, of a man worthy to sit in the seat of Jowett. But it requires the daily and hourly intercourse with him which I am privileged to enjoy to appreciate fully the wisdom of his policy and the warmth and kindliness of his heart. He is a man whom one can not only serve and respect as a chief but delight in as a kind and sympathetic friend, and this is the light in which he is regarded throughout. From the Senior Tutor to the freshmen I believe that there is no one whose heart does not go out towards the Master, no one who does not wish to merit his approval, and shrink from saying or doing anything which could hurt or grieve him. But the Master and we his contemporaries are getting on in life ; we may hope to be permitted to serve the College for some years still, but we must look to the younger generation to bear the burden and heat of the day. I am very glad that you have taken the opportunity to-day to make the acquaintance of our Junior Fellow, Mr. Urquhart. He and John Smith, and Palmer, and Pickard-Cambridge form a group of splendid recruits whom it is very pleasant for us old fellows to see growing up around us, and in whose hands we may be well content to leave the destinies of the ship when the helm drops from our hands. May I say one word about a dear friend of mine, unfortunately no longer to be classed among the younger ones, but a comparatively recent addition to our body ? We have Sir John Conroy with us this evening, and I can only repeat with hearty endorsement the judgement which the late Master expressed that it was a happy day for the College when Sir John joined its ranks.

‘ Now I have spoken of the seniors, and you will have a natural curiosity to know what the mass of the present undergraduates are like. Well, I do them no more than justice when I say that they appear to me as nice a set of young fellows as ever came within the walls. They keep up the reputation of the College in the Schools and in the University

Scholarships ; they keep it up on the cricket field, and on the river.

‘ Above all, Balliol seems to me in a good state with regard to the *articulus stantis vel cadentis Collegii*, the goodwill and kindly feeling between the Dons and the Undergraduates and the different classes and sections of the Undergraduates among themselves. I think that the new cricket field, the Master’s field as we call it now, which we owe so largely to the magnificent response made by the liberality of the Balliol men to the late Master’s appeal—I think that the Master’s field, by bringing our playground to our own doors, has added much to the opportunities of friendly intercourse amongst the men. In one respect I think the present generation is more fortunate, not indeed than mine, but than some other intermediate ones. At one time in the eighties the College was certainly too big. I cannot regret this, because it was the direct result of our performance of what always seemed to me a great national duty, namely, our reception of the great mass of the India Civil Service probationers under the old system. If we had to face that time again I for one would not shrink from performing the service for the Empire ; but I much prefer the present system under which the probationers are distributed throughout the University, and those who are with us are generally our own men remaining with us for an extra year. A College of one hundred and fifty men can live and work as a single society. If it goes up to two hundred it gets, as we found by experience, out of hand. Above all we do not want any large section of men of any peculiar type, who can herd together and make a set by themselves apart from the main current of the life of the College. The main current always has consisted, and to my mind always must consist, of English public school boys. Other types and classes are welcome. They have much to learn from the public school men and the public school men have much to learn from them. If I may be allowed to instance my own case, when I came to Balliol I had only one schoolfellow in the College or in the University. Evelyn Abbott was in almost the same position. I feel an

eternal debt of gratitude to the public school men, and especially to the Etonians, for the cordial way in which they received me into their society. We never felt out of it. So I hope it is now. Of one thing I feel certain, that the only way to keep the College together is to keep our hold on the great public schools and to make the public school men the main trunk on which other branches may be grafted.

‘Now one word as to the future. I look forward to it with confidence, and one main reason why I do so is because I see old Balliol men keeping up the ties of affection to the old College, and anxious that their sons should fill their old place within its walls. The College is, and for the last seven or eight years has been, full of the sons of Balliol men. Loyalty to the College has been with these men a hereditary sentiment. My generation has played up abundantly in this respect and now the turn of another generation is coming. I have greeted the children of my contemporaries by scores. Next term for the first time I shall greet a spiritual grandchild, and I hope that he is only the first of a long and distinguished series.’

Shadows began to gather in the years that followed. In the summer of 1897 Conroy had a serious hemorrhage and was ordered to spend the winter in Italy. The Chairmanship of the Board of Faculty of Arts to which Strachan was elected in 1893 brought him much worry and a distressing controversy with one of the members of the Board. The only reason for mentioning it is to record the extraordinary courtesy and patience which, under heavy provocation, he displayed throughout and which led to a reconciliation. In Egypt during the Christmas vacation of 1898-9 he was very unwell, and after it there are many notes in his diary of the fatigue of incessant letter-writing and business. That summer term occurred ‘the great row’ over the honorary degree given to Cecil Rhodes, when

he found himself with a single colleague in opposition to the Master and the rest of the Fellows. Old traditions and old party lines were already breaking up; and with the new Liberalism and its anti-imperial and socialistic tendencies he was entirely out of sympathy. There is a note in his diary of a dinner in these years at which the new doctrine had been let loose: 'Bad speech, though clever', with the comment — 'blazing cad!' Very seldom even in private did he allow himself to make so acrid a criticism.

Most of his Easter and autumn vacations were now spent with Abbott, first at Boar's Hill, afterwards at Beaulieu Court Farm, a pleasant house near the pretty little village of Sunningwell, within an easy ride of Oxford.

'Riding one day', his diary records in July 1899, 'by straight bridle-path from Powder Hill Copse to Ferry Hinksey was stopped by two men who told me gate at head of second field was padlocked. I wrote same night (after going round by Arnold's Walk) to Hodges, farmer, Ferry Hinksey, remonstrating. I said I supposed it was inadvertence and there was no intention to dispute the bridle-road; if otherwise, I must apply to District Council and Field-paths Preservation Society. No answer. Next time I rode that way I went up to gate myself; found padlocks locked, but break possible with some complication at other part of chain, a tongue-bar going through ring. Two queries: (1) Have they a right to put on chain which compels rider to dismount? (2) Are they trying by locked padlock to establish prescriptive right to close?'

Abbott was as well as usual, and as helpful as ever. But Conroy was steadily losing ground. In September 1900 he left England for the last time, and on 15th December died at Rome, 'leaving to his friends

the helpful memory of a gracious and noble life'. The news reached Strachan at Naples on his way out to Egypt; and Eustace Corbet, with whom he stayed at Cairo, found him depressed and poorly.

In July 1901 Abbott had gone to Malvern, where soon after his arrival he became seriously ill. Strachan went there to be near him. On 1st August he wrote to Caird, 'He is decidedly better, but I cannot help feeling that his general state is very serious. Mrs. Green has come round for the day on her way back to Oxford. She is sitting with him while I write, which will do something to cheer him up. He is brave as ever.' A fortnight later, 'he is better and able to enjoy conversation with Le Marchant and me; but clearly sees that he will not be fit for work next term'. For a while there seemed good hope of getting him back to Oxford, but complete and permanent retirement from College work was inevitable. From that time on he 'went up and down'. George and Ada Strachan had joined Strachan then, and were a great comfort to him. Though the doctor kept hopeful, Abbott grew steadily worse towards the end of the month; on Saturday the 31st Strachan telegraphed for Mrs. Green. She came on Monday, to find him sinking; he died next day. He was buried, by his own wish, not at Oxford, but at Redlands, near Bristol, beside the grave where, seventeen years before, had been laid Sarah Frances Alleyne, who was more than a sister to him.

Strachan was heartbroken. It was the loss not only of a close friend, but of one who had been his special care and charge, and to whom in turn he always went for advice or encouragement. For a while after the funeral he had to be by himself. 'He

writes,' Mrs. Green told me in a letter from Oxford a few days later, ' that he has had plenty of sleep and feels much better. I think it was good for him to be alone, though it seemed desolate. His brother George and his sister-in-law are looking after him at Malvern in an understanding way.' Then he went to the Slacks at Keswick. Part of a letter of his to Caird from there may be given :

Derwent Hill, Keswick,
Sunday, 14 September 1901.

MY DEAR MASTER,

I have not written to you till now because I felt all letter-writing a burden, and I know you would not wish to hear from me while that feeling lasted. Now that I have fairly pulled myself together and have run into the haven of rest which our dear Mrs. Slack provides with the certainty that one is welcome, I feel inclined to write and say how deeply I thank you and Carrie for your most kind and sympathetic letters. It is a great consolation when wise and kind friends like you two enter so completely into the situation and appreciate what still remains and its limitations. What you say is the true line, that we who survive must be more than ever to each other in future, and do our work while it is day. So I turn to College business. . . .

. . . I have had most pleasant and affectionate letters from the Junior Fellows. I think that they forgive us the almost unpardonable sin of belonging to a different generation to themselves. The other is that going back to our generation I have had a delightful intercourse with Mary Talbot. She is all sympathy and consolation as is her nature . . . I have been very happy in having two such friends as Mary and Mrs. Green beside me at this time of trouble. My dear Mrs. Sellar wrote to me speaking of Mrs. Green as an 'angel of consolation', which is just no metaphor, but solid and sober truth.



With his God-daughter, Mary Slack (1901)

There was something else I had to say, more in the way of business ; but it has gone from me.

With best love to your dear wife, I remain
Your affectionate,

J. L. STRACHAN-DAVIDSON.

A few days later he wrote to Pickard-Cambridge :

‘ Thank you very much for your kind letter and your wife for her message. You will pardon the delay in answering, but I have been feeling very tired and disinclined for exertion of any sort.

‘ The sympathy of friends is a great consolation, especially when it comes from you my younger brethren, on whom my life must now mainly depend. I am well assured that I shall be surrounded by an atmosphere not only of common interests, but of sincere goodwill and friendship ; to breathe such an air is, for me at least, the first requisite for happiness.’

The Memorial tablet to Conroy and Abbott jointly, familiar to all later members of the College, was put up in Chapel during the next year. The inscription was composed by Strachan, aided by some suggestions from both Caird and Forbes ; the words used on it of Conroy, ‘ *quem suavitate indolis insignem Christiana fides etiam amabiliorem fecit*’, and of Abbott, ‘ *columen collegii nostri, amicis iucundissimum subsidium, vitæ constanter actæ exemplar*’, might well be applied to himself.

To his ‘ younger brethren ’ he clung with touching affection. They did not fail in response ; Cyril Bailey ‘ often felt like a son ’ to him. But they could not replace those who were gone. There was henceforth a tinge of solitariness in his College life. A new generation had ideas and views different from his ; and he did not change his own ; indeed he was incapable

of changing them. The College was to him a family, and with the increase of numbers and the influx of strange elements it was a rather unmanageable family. To 'bridge the gulf between Rhodes Scholars and Etonians' was a problem that kept vexing him. To preserve intact the connexion between Balliol and the great public schools, Eton in particular, he regarded, as has already been seen, as of the first importance; and equally so, to foster the family tradition by opening the door as widely as possible to the sons of those who had been Balliol men themselves, and compelling them to come in. 'Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not', was one of the sayings oftenest on his lips. He fought with all his strength against the proposal to institute a poverty-qualification for holders of scholarships, because it would deplete the field of candidates and thus lower the standard of the past, the maintenance of which was the *unum necessarium*. In this and in other matters he found himself now habitually in a minority, or even now and then alone; and that hurt him.

When the collapse of the Unionist Ministry became imminent in 1905 and a General Election was in prospect, there were great searchings of heart among Free-traders, Unionist and Liberal, as to the representation of Oxford University. In answer to a circular privately sent out, inviting opinion on this matter, Strachan wrote a very characteristic letter, which is interesting apart from the immediate occasion:

'I earnestly hope that no candidate will be put forward, and especially that Lord Hugh Cecil will not be a candidate. If he is, I regard it as certain that the clergy will vote in a body

for Cecil and Talbot and that Anson will be left in the cold. The clericals hate him for the Kenyon-Slaney clause and for his recent action against their making Sunday Schools and organ-playing a qualification for the post of elementary school-master. Cecil is the man after their own heart, and they love Talbot too for his fight against the Burials Bill. I could not imagine two men who would less represent me, or (I should have thought) you either. I look on Anson as an excellent specimen of an academic candidate, and if we do not choose such men but select on party grounds, as if we were an ordinary constituency, I do not see how we can hope to keep our representation.

‘After all Anson is by no means a whole-hogger, and my personal opinion is that it is not in the real interests of Free Trade to weed men like him out of the House; else when the next swing of the pendulum comes, as come it will, there will be nobody but Chamberlainites to take up the reins. That is evidently the opinion of Balfour of Burleigh and the Scotch Free Traders, with whom I should wish to associate myself. This, however, is vaticination. The other point is more one of principle. We have been calling ever since I can remember for an academic representative. Now we have got one after putting great pressure on him to stand, it will be poor sport to throw him overboard, because he shows some wavering on an issue which is really in no danger of being carried against us at the election.’

He was a trimmer, in the good sense of that much-abused word. All his pupils will remember with what sympathetic enthusiasm he would follow out the fruitless struggles of Cicero to create a moderate Central party in Rome. Perhaps he did not ever quite realize that the Liberalism of a previous generation makes but a faint appeal to the mind of the generation which has succeeded them.

Caird's health was by then failing. At the Gaudies

of 1905 and 1906 he was absent, and Strachan presided as Vicegerent. His speeches on these occasions were always pleasant to hear; he had no oratorical gift, but tact and simplicity and warmth of feeling largely supplied its place. His notes for some of them which accidentally survive show what great pains he took over them.

In May 1907 Caird resigned the Mastership. His tenure of that office, for between thirteen and fourteen years, had covered the insensible transition from an old to a new world. Throughout it, Strachan had been Caird's loyal and trusted colleague. He had borne many sorrows; he had lost many friends: Conroy in 1900, Abbott in 1901, his brother George, after a long illness, just a year later; Mrs. Slack in 1904; Pelham early in 1907. He clung touchingly to his friends' children. The photograph of him with his god-daughter, Mary Slack, taken when he was at Derwent Hill in the sad September of 1901, always stood over his fireplace. I am allowed to quote from some of his letters to her, beginning with her babyhood.

Balliol,

5 December, 1897.

MY DEAR GOD-DAUGHTER,

I hope that you will accept a little silver basin, which will be sent you as soon as your name has been written on it. While you are small I hope that you will eat your bread and milk or your porridge out of it, and when you come to have a house of your own it can be used as a sugar basin.

I trust that we may both live for me to see you grow up into a nice sweet girl, who will spare a little love for an old fellow who dearly loved your family for two generations before you were born.

Your affectionate,

J. L. STRACHAN-DAVIDSON.

George Hotel, Harrogate,
Thursday, 11 September 1902.

MY DEAR MARY,

I was very glad to get a letter from my little pet. I hope that I shall be able to come and see her, but I cannot always do what I want. There are so many stupid things that must be done whether one likes it or not. So I cannot promise as I should wish to do, but you may be sure I will do my best. I wonder if you will be able to read my writing : I can read yours quite easily. . . .

Your affectionate Godfather.

Friday, 24 July 1903.

MY DEAR MARY,

I am writing in the train and therefore use pencil. I am on my way to Newcastle and hope to sail from there to-night to go to Christiania in Norway. My sister-in-law Ada is staying with some Danish friends at a watering-place near there, and I am going to fetch her. I do not know how long we shall stay in Norway, perhaps a fortnight or three weeks.

Please tell your mother with my love that I have every hope that I shall be able to accept her kind invitation and yours, and to look in on you on my way south in September.

I shall very much like to see my little pet again. With love and kisses, I remain,

Your affectionate Godfather.

And four years later there is another :

Balliol,
19 July 1907.

MY DEAR MARY,

In looking over my letters I find a very nice one from you congratulating me on being Master of Balliol ; but I am not sure whether I ever answered it, and indeed I was so busy at that time that I did not know where to put myself. Thank

you very much, and please give my best thanks to your father and mother for their kind letters received at the same time.

I wish that I could come and see you, but I am much detained with College business and the arrangements for getting into my new house. When I am once established here I shall have room for a little girl, and I hope that you will come and see me sometimes.

Now goodbye. Love to father and mother and Aidan and the baby.

Your affectionate Godfather.

Dorothy Willert (now Mrs. Loyd) was another god-daughter whom he loved deeply. At the Balliol Ball in June 1903, when she first came out, he notes proudly in his diary that she was the beauty of the evening. He took her to Henley a few days later. Her engagement in 1910 actually took his mind off its preoccupation with the proposal to lower the age of candidates for the Indian Civil Service. Another god-daughter yet was Margaret Bowlby. 'My god-daughter Margaret, sweet (five years now)' is a note in his diary of a visit to the Bowlbys at Eton.

Mrs. Sellar, that brilliant and fascinating lady who retained to great old age the spirits of a girl, was one of his close friends, and when she stayed at Oxford she had the unique privilege of a key of the College gate to let herself in and out at her own will; not she only, but her children and grandchildren were frequent and welcome visitors. Still closer was the friendship with Mrs. Green, now one of the few survivors of an earlier Balliol generation.

'When I came to Oxford in 1871', Mrs. Green writes, 'I heard much of Mr. Strachan-Davidson from my husband and others, but he was then in Egypt recovering from one of his serious attacks of illness. When he returned, my recollection is of a most attractive man with great charm of manner, and

a combination of reserve and of readiness on occasions to make known his inner feelings. His kindness and sympathy were unfailing. My husband had a great affection for him. He often spoke to me of his stepmother and of all he owed to her. His devotion to her was great. I think his own delicate health made him understand and be most chivalrous to those who were ill or hindered by weakness.

‘The conservative element in his character made the opposition of the younger Fellows trying, but personal relations were not affected by it. When Mr. Jowett died, and there was a desire that an outsider should succeed him, the situation was a painful one; but some years later he told me that no bitterness remained. The reception of the new Master was made easy by Mr. Strachan-Davidson’s own tact and control.

‘His power and faithfulness in friendship need no comment from me. I have good reason to value it deeply, and no difference of opinion disturbed the even course of it, though I may have caused temporary pain by expressing crude democratic opinions or advanced opinions on Women’s Education or the Suffrage.

‘I remember his great knowledge of his Bible. I always felt what a strong current of deep religious life there was in him. I was once at Shap with him and Mr. Abbott at a time of much anxiety to all of us; and one day he and I were on a hill looking at a wide view, and in the distance a white road climbed a steep slope and disappeared round a corner. I said how like life that was and how sad. He answered “Yes, but the road goes on round the corner, and nothing in life comes to an end”. His courage and faithfulness helped me much.’

With the movement for making Oxford a sort of entrepôt for all kinds and varieties of educational wares he was out of sympathy and made no concealment of it. A note in his diary one August—‘College overrun with extensionists. I kept clear of them’, and another in a later year, ‘College full of extensionists. I saw

little of them'—sufficiently indicate his attitude. Yet in this as in other matters his unfailing kindness overcame any prejudices; and the tutorial classes for working men held at Summer Schools in Oxford during the vacations were aided by him not only with generous contributions from his purse, but with an equally generous and characteristic personal hospitality.

It was, however, his firm and unvarying doctrine that not only was Oxford the best of all Universities and Balliol the best of all Colleges, but the Oxford course of studies for the Arts degree in Honours, as it stood at the central period of his own life, was, for those who were capable of receiving and assimilating it, the best of all educations. It was the Ark of the covenant. The proposal put forward in 1898 for amalgamation of Mods and Greats into a single three-year course made him fairly lose his temper. His whole aim was that the College, while opening itself widely to talent or promise from any quarter, should preserve the quiet dignity which was its noble tradition, and concentrate on giving the best to the best, for its own sake and for the sake of the nation and the Empire.

The imperial mission of Oxford and of Balliol took its most imposing shape in relation to India; and for many years Indian affairs, and the choice and training of those who were to conduct Indian administration, bulked so largely in his life that they must be specially emphasized and pursued into some detail. He was never in India itself; but he had grown up among Anglo-Indian surroundings, and both at home and in his many visits to Egypt he had entered deeply into

that atmosphere. One or another of his own old pupils too was constantly revisiting Balliol, on an Indian furlough, and no visitors were more welcome to him. Between 1878 and 1914 more than 200 men had passed through the College into the Indian Civil Service, equipped for their high duties by the best of its teaching and rooted in its great traditions.

‘Throughout the history of the administration of India’, in the words of the Report of the 1912 Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, ‘the Indian Civil Service has been regarded as the senior of all the services, and as the one upon which the responsibility for good government ultimately rests.’ It was a service in which Strachan took the keenest and most continuous interest. ‘I have fought for the Civil Service at Oxford for the last thirty years,’ he said in evidence before the Royal Commission in 1913; ‘and’, he added—all who knew him will be able to picture the look and accent with which the words were spoken—‘not always successfully.’

For no less than seventeen years (1888–1905) Balliol men were successive Viceroys; and two of the three were closely connected with him, Lord Lansdowne as his contemporary and Lord Curzon as his pupil. The Service itself and the India Office were full of Balliol men. Sir Arthur Godley (now Lord Kilbracken), who was Permanent Under-Secretary of State from 1883 until 1909, was a close friend; and so was Court-hope, who was First Civil Service Commissioner from 1892 until 1907. With both of them Strachan was all the time in constant touch. By insensible degrees he became a sort of permanent liaison-officer between the Government and the University.

No history need be attempted here of the many changes made or proposed during those thirty years in the Indian Civil Service Regulations, and no full account can be given of the many intricate problems presented for solution. But in order to understand the point for which Strachan fought so persistently, a few salient historical details may be briefly recalled. In Macaulay's famous Report of 1855 two doctrines were laid down; first, that the Civil Servants of the Company (or at least a considerable number of them) ought to be men who had taken their Arts degree at Oxford or Cambridge; secondly, that the examination for admission to the Service should not be narrowly professional, but, in Macaulay's words, 'of such a nature that no candidate who may fail shall, to whatever calling he may betake himself, have any reason to regret the time and labour which he spent in preparing himself to be examined.' When open competitive examination was instituted under the Government of India Act of 1858, these doctrines were accepted. But their application fluctuated very greatly. The normal age at which it was desirable that civilians should go out to India was, as it has always since remained, a point on which expert opinion differed. No less controversy arose on the question whether the University course contemplated should precede or follow the selective examination and whether or how far, in the latter event, it should be framed on special and quasi-professional lines. The limit of age for competition, originally twenty-three, was reduced by successive stages, until in 1878 it was fixed at nineteen, and remained there for the next thirteen years. Then there was a change of policy: in 1892 it was raised to twenty-three, and in 1906 further raised to twenty-four.

Under the earlier system, successful candidates proceeded to a two-year probationary course at one of the Universities. A certain number were allotted to Oxford, and of these the greater number went to Balliol. It was not a satisfactory plan either for them or for the College. They were pursuing studies of their own under their own tutors. They could not in the nature of things be assimilated fully into the College life. They were not so much Balliol men as lodgers in Balliol, *inquilini cives*, in the phrase which Strachan was so fond of quoting. And, what was to his mind most important, they were necessarily precluded from taking that complete Oxford course which he firmly believed the best preparation in the world for administrative duties and high responsibilities.

It was round this last point that Strachan's interest centred. He worked consistently to secure two objects, first, that the age-limit should be so fixed as to allow future Indian Civilians, if they went to Oxford, to take a full Arts Course qualifying for a degree; secondly, that the subjects of examination and the marks assigned to them should be so determined as to give due weight to the subjects forming the content of the School of *Literae Humaniores*. This latter claim raised intricate and often stormy controversies both as between Oxford and Cambridge, and in Oxford itself. The not wholly edifying spectacle was presented of bodies of scholars in various fields—classics, history, philosophy, economics, modern languages—pressing the claims of their own studies and depreciating those of others with an almost theological fury. The celebrated phrase of Bowen's often comes to mind in reviewing the controversy; it was used by him of the supporters of the classics, but bears a wider application :

‘the most brilliant Professors at our Universities jealously and suspiciously mounting guard over their own educational blessings, as if they were keeping an eye on their luggage at a crowded railway station.’

The accusation brought against many of these advocates as being more concerned with the interests of their own field of study than with those of India and of the Empire did not attach to Strachan. His aim was to secure that the Indian Civil Service should embody the highest standards of intellectual training and Western culture ; and his conviction was, that these were embodied and secured with the utmost perfection in the mental and moral discipline, the width of view, the grasp of fundamentals, given by the School of *Literae Humaniores*. It was therefore an object of primary importance to secure for this training its full value in the Indian Civil Service Examination ; to keep it from being overloaded with a long list of extraneous subjects ; and to prevent the misfortune of its being outweighed by an amorphous mass of miscellaneous or fugitive acquirement reached through the ingenuity of professional crammers and deliberately failing to educate the mind.

A full and considered statement of his views, and of the policy which he urged, will be found by those who take a special interest in the subject in a memorandum drawn up by him in June 1913 for the Royal Commission on the Indian Civil Service ; it is a state-paper of admirable lucidity.

His evidence before the Commission a month later was very characteristic and contains several flashes of his ‘obstinate innocence’ as well as of his common-sense. To the question whether an examination framed on the general lines of the ordinary Public School

curriculum would be possible, he replied, 'I think it would, if you could keep jealousies and politics out of it.' On the proposal for the creation of a School of Indian Studies at Oxford his comment was, 'I think the purists, with whom I do not agree, would say that it was merely a Government professional course. It would make a School of which I should not be ashamed, but of which many of my colleagues would be ashamed.' (They would want, he explained, to make such a School 'scientific' and unpractical.) 'It would be quite possible to make an Oriental School which would be considered to be scientific and which would satisfy the purists, but then it would not satisfy you. The men would not come out to India the least better equipped.'

The question of the age of selection had been one of those most debated before the Commission. For reversion to the earlier age of the 1878-91 period it was argued that the new system brought out men to India with tastes, aptitudes, and outlook already fixed, and cast in a non-Indian mould; that it precluded them from reaching positions of real responsibility until about thirty-five; and that the prizes of the Service upon which its prestige and attractiveness depended ('Adam Smith has pointed out that in order to attract people, the important thing is not the average, but the big prizes') were only reached at an age approaching sixty, when full physical and mental vigour through a five-year term of office could hardly be expected. On the other hand it was claimed that competition at the age of seventeen to nineteen meant premature specialization and even intellectual exhaustion; that the difficulties of a three-year probation thereafter were great; and that without such a probation, providing for a fully

liberal education, the civilian entered on Indian duty insufficiently equipped.

On the weight to be attached to the opinion of officials high up in the service his comment was :

‘The men at the top of the tree in India are men who were taken at a young age. Wait ten years, and the men there will be the men who have gone in under the present system. I think you will find that they have just the same objections, supposing you make the change, to the men who go up under your system: they will say, they are not the sort of men we used to get.’

When asked how he could contemplate men going to India without having read (and been searchingly examined in) political economy, his answer was, ‘I am very fond of political economy myself, but once you begin to let in all the things that are desirable, when will you finish? No doubt anthropology is desirable. If the boy has had a good general education, he will have learnt how to learn those things.’

Similarly on the question between an Oxford or Cambridge degree course on the one hand and education in a special institution on the other, he observed with a refreshing detachment from theories of self-determination and self-expression, ‘I think if a boy at that age, or his parents, had made up their minds that he was going into the Indian Civil Service, he would do just what he was told.’ But he insisted that a University training, to have its real value towards effectiveness in practical life, must be taken in its full meaning. ‘It is the worst possible thing for the Indians and for the University that any large number of them should be non-collegiate.’ On the claim that Indian history should be a subject of examination with

equivalent marks to those for Greek or Roman history, his criticism was, ' I should say that comparing Indian history with Greek history it is such a small thing. The books that you have to read for Greek and Roman history are great books.'

As the matter was well put by an Anglo-Indian member of the Commission, the examination for the Indian Civil Service 'was originally designed for British candidates of whom it was assumed that most would possess the average qualities and character of their race'. To this Strachan would only have added that both the examination and the training subsequent to it should be so planned as to secure those qualities and that character at their highest power. In the Indian 'public services', in the wide meaning of that term, there were only between 6,000 and 7,000 Europeans. On them, and primarily on the Indian Civil Service, rested the main burden of administering a country, or rather a continent, with three hundred millions of people; the standard set for them, the quality required in them, must be correspondingly high. To obtain men of that quality, what was wanted was so to frame the conditions of appointment as to secure that they should have fully absorbed and assimilated the English tradition, built up on the solid foundations of historic European culture, and should not be handicapped by competition of 'substitutes', or by opening given to the products of the crammer and the specialist.

It is noteworthy that, in the evidence taken by the Royal Commission, Strachan was recognized on all sides, as it were instinctively, as a high authority. 'The Master of Balliol would tell you that in a moment'—'I wish to say that I am really not an

expert in the matter in the sense that the Master of Balliol is'—these are characteristic answers given to questions asked of other academic witnesses.

The long and occasionally acrimonious controversy between representatives of Oxford and Cambridge on the subjects, and the relative value to be assigned to them, for the Indian Civil Service examination, which went on for two years, in 1903 and 1904, is now a matter of ancient history. But during the whole of that time Strachan could think of little else; and a collection of papers relating to it and put together by him with exceptional care, was endorsed by him in April 1905, 'In case of my death I wish these to be given to Balliol College Library. There is a copy already in the Bodleian.' To some future historian of higher education in England, and of the English government of India, they will no doubt be valuable sources, less for any actual results to which they led than as throwing light on the relations (so important an element in civilization) of organized national education with the direct service of the Empire.

The Indian Civil Service is but one branch, however important, of Imperial service throughout the whole of the British dominions or dependencies. Some brief notice is desirable of Strachan's activities in its other branches, where his advice was often sought, and always carefully given, both on questions of qualifying tests and on actual appointments. Three instances may be taken, from among many others, as illustrating the width and variety of the field. The first is his appointment by Mr. Chamberlain, when Colonial Secre-

tary in 1899, on a Committee to consider the position of students holding in the United Kingdom scholarships granted by Colonial Governments. The 'clear and business-like report' which was the result drew a letter of cordial thanks to him from Mr. Chamberlain.

Another is a full interchange of views with Lord Cromer in the winter of 1903-4 on the best methods of securing some knowledge of Arabic for young men appointed to the Egyptian or Sudanese service. It resulted some time later in the preparation and confidential issue to College Tutors in Oxford of a statement by him of the nature of those services, the qualifications looked for, and the sort of career to which they led, which is a model of lucidity and good sense. A quotation from the concluding paragraph may be given as highly illustrative of the spirit in which he approached such questions.

'In estimating the desirability of these careers, it must be remembered that we have not to deal with an old-established system like that of India, in which (apart from the great prizes) the position which each man may expect to attain, if he behaves well, at the end of a given number of years, can be pretty accurately laid down beforehand. Averages such as those contained in the paper which Sir W. Markby and the Master of Emmanuel have issued respecting the Indian Services would be out of the question in this case. On the other hand we have in Egypt an excellent climate and pleasant society; in the Sudan very interesting and responsible work; and in both the chance of promotion to important posts if a man shows himself really capable. I should be inclined to think that for the average man who is just able to do his duty neither better nor worse than his fellows this is not a promising career. He will probably stick at a much lower point than if he had gone to India or even to Ceylon. On

the other hand, the very indefiniteness of the situation in Egypt (as in some of the frontier provinces in India) gives great chances to a man of real energy and administrative ability. There is no red-tape to interfere with selection. It is a matter of vital importance to those responsible for the welfare of the country that the great posts should be filled by men of practical ability and efficiency. An officer in the lower grades may be sure that his work and conduct will be carefully scrutinized by his superiors, and that merit will not be disregarded. Any day may bring out a chance for him.'

And lastly, to descend from matters of high public policy to one of those particular cases which may come up for handling at any moment and in any part of the world, there is a voluminous correspondence with the Foreign Office a little later on the choice of an English tutor for the eight-year-old Kabaka of Uganda.

The claims made for further express recognition of Geography by the Universities were a subject of much concern and much correspondence in 1907; here he took the conservative side. He deplored the tendency of bodies of specialists to think of little else but the interest or aggrandisement of their own field of study (*de te fabula narratur*, they might have retorted, but he would not have accepted the charge or even seen any plausibility in it); and he was vexed, indeed grieved and disheartened, by the blank refusal of the Civil Service Commissioners to take into consideration whether their proposals in this connexion would disturb the general equilibrium of University studies.

His advice was likewise sought and given in efforts made, with good success, to get the preliminary training of candidates for Foreign Office and Diplomatic Appointments out of the hands of the crammers. In

1905 'practically all the nominees' passed through a crammer's hands. It was largely on his advice given to Lord Lansdowne that a little later the proposed scheme of examination for these appointments was substantially modified.

'I find', he wrote to Courthope on 11 June 1905, 'that a strange child has been fathered on me. I gather that I (bless my soul) am supposed to be the suggester of the proposed scheme about the Foreign Office, whereas I think it as bad as can be. What I suggested was that the Foreign Office should select from your list certain special subjects, i.e. practically the Modern History subjects, for these men to be examined in.

'The proposal as at present framed seems to assume that the type of man who will go in for the Foreign Office is the same as the one who comes to the front in Class I. The thing is absurd. I think of our men'—and he names half a dozen Balliol men in the Civil Service—'all men of first-rate ability, but no more fit to be attachés than to be parsons. Besides, not one of them could look at the Service from insufficient means. What you want is the type of man who is born to a competence and has been to a public school. This sort of man could not live in an examination like Class I except by being crammed to the throat. If you want to get this sort of man decently educated you must look to the Modern History School.'

When Sir Edward Grey succeeded Lord Lansdowne as Foreign Secretary it was one Balliol man following another, and the confidential relations remained. A letter from the Under-Secretary to Strachan congratulating him on his election as Master adds thanks for notes supplied by him on Foreign Office candidates; 'they are exactly the kind of information which will be of great use to the Secretary of State in making his

selection.' Of formal certificates as to character he had the lowest opinion. In his evidence before the Indian Civil Service Commission he put this with great frankness. ' There is a long series of questions which seem to me perhaps more fitted for a clerk seeking employment ; then there is a sensible one : " Would you employ him in a position of trust in your own affairs or recommend him to one of your friends for such a position ? " In some cases ' , he went on boldly, ' we might have lost extremely good men in regard to whom I could not say they have never been drunk.'

Such cases—and they occur from time to time in all Colleges—he handled with a happy mixture of firmness and sympathy. One undergraduate, who afterwards rose to very high distinction in the Indian Civil Service, he saved from being sent down, with the inevitable wreck of his whole career, by having him brought to live in a spare room of his own set and keeping him under his eye there. Such actions may be insufficiently appreciated at the time ; they are not forgotten afterwards.

At the end of November 1906 Strachan was riding on Shotover by himself when his horse (an animal that he had ridden for years) bucked and threw him. He fell heavily on his shoulder, which was broken and dislocated. Fortunately a ' good Samaritan ' who was riding near by saw the accident happen ; he galloped up, caught the horse, and with the help of another man got Strachan along to a house half-way down the hill, where he was taken care of until a cab could be fetched to take him back to College. After a first unsuccessful attempt to set the limb there, Dr. Watson Cheyne was brought down from London in consulta-

tion ; and he was moved in a day or two to the Sarah Acland Home, where the necessary operation, an elaborate one, was excellently performed. He was there for nearly two months. 'All the nurses', he notes in his diary, 'very kind and attentive. Ada, Emily,'—this was Ada's sister, Mrs. Garner—'and Mrs. Green most constant and tender in looking after me, and all friends very kind.' His recovery was satisfactory, and in spring his general health and spirits did not show any obvious traces of failure, though he was doubtless less able to bear the strain and fatigue of the months which ensued. At the end of January he was able to go off to Valescure, his competent and devoted servant Clarke accompanying him. Sir Laurence Jones and his family were at their villa about a mile off, and there were a good many other friends or acquaintances in the neighbourhood. Godfrey Benson and his wife came later : also Anson ; and he had a number of pleasant drives and walks. He was much elated by a telegram announcing that the Balliol Torpid had gone head of the river. He returned to England, by sea from Marseilles to Plymouth, towards the end of April.

About this time he bought the freehold of a piece of land immediately adjoining Balliol, between it and St. John's, and presented it to the College for an additional lecture-room, which was badly wanted, to be built on it. His arms are carved on the fireplace there in grateful recognition. It was one of many acts of generosity to his College which it would be superfluous to enumerate. But mention may be made of his gift of £1,200 to the Senior Common Room in 1897, and of the fact that he gave £100 a year regularly, and

very often a good deal more, to the fund for helping poor men to come to Balliol. Of course they did not know who their benefactor was.

Caird's resignation of the Mastership was tendered to the Visitor, and accepted by him, at the beginning of May. For two years he had been in increasingly feeble health; and Strachan had, for a long time in effect, and afterwards formally, been obliged to act as Vice-gerent. Both in a private letter to Strachan announcing his decision, and in a further letter conveying his thanks to the Fellows for the sympathy with which they had received it, he laid warm stress on the great kindness and help which he had throughout received from all of them, and from Strachan in particular, 'without which I could not believe that I could have done any good.' A few days later Paravicini wrote to Strachan on behalf of his colleagues:

DEAR STRACHAN-DAVIDSON,

It is the unanimous desire of the Fellows that you should now be asked whether you would accept election to the Mastership of the College: and they earnestly hope that you will be able to say yes.

They feel that as the proposal is the expression of their unanimous opinion, so its acceptance would be the best guarantee of the future concord and prosperity of the College.

Very truly yours,

F. DE PARAVICINI.

A note of the same day from Mrs. Caird may here be added.

Balliol College,

Tuesday Evening.

MY DEAR JAMES,

You know with what heartfelt joy I heard the information you brought this afternoon. But I cannot refrain from saying

again how I hail it, first of all for the sake of the College ; next, for its promise of the most fitting and happiest condition of life for you ; and lastly, that it also promises the best comfort and compensation to us.

Yours ever affectionately,

C. F. CAIRD.

The formal election followed in due course on the 5th of June. It not only was unanimous but was a source of universal satisfaction to all friends of his own or of the College. Among the few things which he took pains to keep, and even (to some extent) to keep in order, are nearly five hundred letters of congratulation, most of them from old Balliol men in all parts of the world ; many from India, others from the Malay States, Jamaica, Khartoum, Burma, Cyprus, Pretoria, British Honduras, China, British Columbia, Sierra Leone. In one, from an old friend of the family, there is a pleasant reminiscence : ‘ I remember your dear Mother saying, James would know just what to do if he were Pope.’

Hardly less noticeable throughout than the warmth of these letters is the frequency of an expression of the writers’ feeling that the Mastership had been long overdue. Strachan was now in his sixty-fourth year. He had been obliged to take leave of absence for the preceding Lent Term ; it was doubtful whether he would not have in future to be regularly abroad for part of the winter ; and a divergence of attitude between him and several of the younger Fellows was obvious and was naturally increasing with time. But he accepted the new position with pride and cheerfulness, and without hesitation. On his first appearance in Hall as Master, in giving the traditional toast

Floreat domus de Balliolo, he added a few grave and hopeful words :

‘I take over the College, as I believe, in good condition, intellectually vigorous, morally sound, socially friendly and united. As I think of the colleagues who have so long worked alongside of me, and as I look on this assemblage of the very flower of the youth of England, I feel that I am justified in looking forward with good courage and high hope to the future. We are the citizens of no mean city, and its future depends upon us. Let us rise to the height of this responsibility. Let us all resolve to live up to the past greatness of our College, and to hand it on not impaired, or perhaps even a little better than we received it, to those that are to come after.

‘It is a very proud position to which you have called me, and I do feel proud to occupy it, and deeply grateful for the confidence which has been reposed in me. I hope that you will all be my friends and fellow helpers. That man will help me best who most contributes to keep the College together and to promote good work and good fellowship from one end of it to the other. As one called to a great and responsible post, as one hoping to reap where greater men have sown, I hope it will not be presumptuous in me to quote the words of the commission given to Joshua : “Moses my servant is dead ; now therefore arise, thou and all this people ; as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee ; only be thou strong and very courageous, turn not to the right hand or to the left, then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success.”

‘Let me say a few words of the Chief who to our great loss and great sorrow has found himself obliged to lay down this office. I speak to some who on account of his long illness have known little of our Master, but to some likewise who knew him and his work and his wonderful personality. I had the privilege of being his pupil, and I owe more than I can tell to his teaching. He seemed to lift a veil and open

new worlds of thought and feeling. Though I have deserted the paths of philosophy for those of history, I have always felt that something which I had learned from him remained with me, and made my life something different from what it would have been if I had not sat at his feet.

‘One thing more. Our late Chief lies sorely stricken not very far from us to-night. I am sure that you will feel that anything like noisy demonstrations would be out of place, and I hope that out of respect and sympathy the College will be quiet to-night.’

It was quiet, as it had been quieted by his tactful interposition fourteen years earlier. To say that his appeals to the good sense and good feeling of the undergraduates were always fully successful might exceed the truth. But his pressure on them to regard the dignity of their College and always to act like gentlemen was never wholly in vain. It was made less in words than by the constant and silent influence of his example. For Balliol men nothing was to his mind too good; for they had been brought up in the best English tradition. He was always active in supporting or urging their claims; and indeed the maxim that ‘we maun gie our ain fish-guts to our ain sea-maws’ was one which had his cordial approval. But this privileged position carried with it an equally high responsibility. It became them to live fully up to the tradition; to be scholars and gentlemen, and to be, in the best sense of the term, men of the world. Even in little things, in the ordinary courtesies and proprieties of life, this was so. It was one of his high expressions of approval to say of some one, ‘He can take his wine like a gentleman.’

Almost simultaneous with his election as Master was

the installation of Lord Curzon as Chancellor of the University. As a Curator of the Sheldonian, he shared the responsibility for the arrangement of the function; 'all went off well' is the brief entry in his diary. The Balliol Gaudy on the 28th of June was to have been signalized by the presence, a unique conjunction, of three Chancellors, all members of the College: Lord Loreburn, Lord Chancellor of England, Mr. Asquith, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Chancellor of the University. Mr. Asquith was unfortunately unable to be there; but the brilliant and distinguished assemblage was a good omen for the new reign. A few days earlier he had given his first dinner party in the Master's dining-room; much work had to be done on the house and he did not begin to occupy it until September. 'Great difficulty in settling in' he notes then in his diary. He was never perhaps quite as happy there as he had been in the familiar discomfort of the rooms he had lived in for thirty years. That autumn, too, and through the winter and spring he suffered much from sciatica; and both University and College affairs were troublesome. He clung more and more to his older friends, now becoming rapidly fewer. His first week-end party in the Master's house was very small, but to his infinite satisfaction—and to hers—it included Mrs. Sellar; and at dinner on the Saturday evening he had not only his sister-in-law but Miss Talbot and Mrs. Green and Miss Abbott; and the Willerts and Henry Butcher, and my wife and myself. On the next evening there was a pretty little incident. The Bowlbys were in Oxford and came to dinner, bringing with them, at the Master's insistent invitation, his god-daughter, then a little girl of nine or

ten. When the ladies rose from table she got up with them, but forthwith set herself to the duty of folding up her napkin. Perhaps it was a larger one than she was used to handle ; anyhow she found some difficulty in executing the job to her satisfaction, and was left by the others still labouring over it and with no eyes or ears for anything else. Round her, until she completed the work to her satisfaction, stood clustered, in intense interest, the Master of Balliol, the Senior Member for Cambridge University, and the Professor of Poetry. They had tact enough not to interfere with any offer of help or advice, and all three were pleased ; but Strachan was radiant.

A month in Egypt at Christmas with his sister-in-law, now much of an invalid, did not do much to mend his health, and all through the next year he suffered badly from sciatica and was under treatment and a strict regimen. He was at a nursing home in London during July and felt lonely and depressed ; but managed to be at a dinner given to Mr. Asquith by thirty Balliol members of Parliament. The speech in which Mr. Asquith proclaimed (as he might among friends) the 'effortless superiority' of Balliol, and gave a note of warning against increase of the numbers of the College, was very cordial to him. Besides illness, there was College trouble arising out of what he regarded as a dangerous tendency in the lecturing work to pursue variety to the loss of concentration on essentials, and out of the vexed question of a poverty-test for recipients of the emoluments of scholarships.

That midsummer Paravicini, the last of his own contemporaries on the governing body of Balliol, retired from ill-health. He remained an invalid until his

death in 1920. He had not been able to come to the Gaudy on the 27th of June, when Mr. Asquith was the chief guest. Two days afterwards Strachan wrote to him,

‘ I am very sorry that you are so poorly and unable to join us in the function of last Saturday, or even to receive in person our parting gift. So one is reduced to a line on paper to beg you to receive a facsimile of “the Man” as a token of regard and affection from your brethren. It is now nearly forty-six years ago since Woolkes took you and Abbott and me together to Exeter to be matriculated, and we may look back, I hope, on all the intervening time as having been passed in mutual esteem and good will. The rest are babes in comparison with us, but each I am sure, as far as his memory goes back, has kindly thoughts of you, and wishes you and the Baroness all health and peace in your retirement.

‘ In the name of us all, I remain yours most sincerely.’

Caird’s death at the beginning of November, though long expected, was a fresh grief. The address Strachan gave in Chapel on the following Sunday cost him a great effort. In the recollection of those who heard it, it was, while ‘very melancholy’ in tone, the most striking of the few addresses or sermons which he delivered in Chapel as Master. For once, he spoke on a matter about which he was habitually reticent, the belief in immortality.

‘ Can we honestly believe it in spite of the evidence of our senses? Is “measureless expansion” the idea which is naturally borne in on our minds as we stand by the deathbed of a friend? It may be so in some cases; but I have not found it so.

‘ Nevertheless, the belief that the soul survives death is a fundamental doctrine of Natural Religion, that is to say, of

that body of convictions to which, led by its greatest minds, the human race has worked its way by means of the instincts and the experiences of the servants of God of all nations and of all creeds through the centuries. There must be a deep-seated cause for it somewhere.

‘What was Caird’s belief on this? He knew and acknowledged all that is to be said against the acceptance of the doctrine. He made no attempt to ignore the difficulty, but he rose above it. Caird thought (if I have interpreted him aright) that if you isolate the doctrine of the life of the soul after death, there is no sufficient evidence for it; it can be believed only as part of a greater faith, the faith in the goodness of the Divine Nature, and in the Divine Government of the world. He pointed out that the other things which seem to us evils—pain, want, bereavement, danger, weakness, temptation—are not only things to be resisted and overcome (as, thank God, they can be resisted, and by His Grace overcome), but things which God in His providence has appointed as means for exercising and maturing the noblest features of character. Can we suppose then that death itself is the exception to the universal rule? that here at the last we have an evil which is no stepping stone to good? Is it not more rational to conclude that there is no such dreadful breach of continuity, and that death too is an essential part of man’s education as a spiritual being?

‘That, I think, is the argument.’

But otherwise things were going more smoothly. Differences on matters of principle which had led to the resignation of one of the Fellows had been accommodated, and the resignation withdrawn. He had, after several experiments, got a safe horse, and in spite of sciatica resumed riding regularly. His speech at the College Gaudy in 1909 was described at the time by A. L. Smith as ‘genial pessimism’. His work on Roman Criminal Law made steady progress, and was

approaching completion. That autumn, when he was staying with Lord Newlands at Mauldslie, his host begged him to sit for his portrait to Sir George Reid, the portrait to be hung in Balliol Hall; that winter and the following spring he sat for it at Reid's house in Somerset, and it was finished after a good many delays in summer and hung where it now is in October. It could not have been in better hands, and gave the greatest satisfaction to all his friends.

Great changes were taking place in the structure of the College: the replacement by Lord Loreburn of the beautiful east window in the Chapel which had been scrapped and replaced by an early Victorian monstrosity when Butterfield rebuilt the Chapel; the raising of the sills of the windows in Hall and the panelling of the walls below them; and later, the successful filling up of the gap in the line of buildings in the garden quadrangle, which (while it did away with an old and familiar institution known to generations by the name of Periham) added immensely to the balance and beauty of the quadrangle.

The extant diaries stop in December 1912; during the three or four years previous they had been much more full; for he had to rely more on written notes to supplement a memory which was now apt to fail him. They are not happy reading, for the note of grief and weariness recurs very often in them; yet they make one realize more fully by what an effort and with what self-forgetfulness he kept up that cheerful kindness which his friends counted on as completely as they prized it deeply. Willert's death, after a long weary illness, in March 1912, came at a time when he could ill bear it. A section of the College was in one of



The Master in Oxford (1910)

those recurrent phases whose appearance and disappearance can never be wholly accounted for, of childishly ostentatious extravagance with a good deal of drinking, gambling, and general disorder. On the other hand the spread among the reading men of the doctrine and fashion of a somewhat crude socialism gave him equally great concern, as being less a thing that would soon work its own cure. Beyond all, however, he recognized reluctantly and deplored acutely the spread of a more subtle kind of anarchism which lay at the root of other disorders ; the loss or weakening of that love for the College, that submission to its atmosphere and tradition, that sense of its prestige, its dignity, its standards, which were the controlling motives of his own life. Oxford, and Balliol with the rest of Oxford, had changed silently but profoundly ; in widening its range and throwing itself into the whole modern movement it was, he felt, ceasing to be what it had been, *hortus inclusus*, a seat of unique social, intellectual, and moral culture, of 'doing its own business' and giving an incomparable preparation for a governing class which was so both by inheritance and by stable tradition, but in which that inheritance was maintained by simplicity, self-control, commerce with the highest achievements of the human mind, and a sense of the organic unity of national history.

The two volumes of *Problems of Roman Criminal Law*, published in the autumn of 1912, were the most important, and as it turned out the last, of his published writings. They represented the labour of some ten years and the study of many more. The work originated in a long and elaborate critical notice of Mommsen's *Römisches Strafrecht*, which he had written

for the *English Historical Review*. In his preface he says that he wishes his own book to be regarded as, in the main, a supplement to Mommsen; he chose his title to make it clear that he did not attempt the gigantic task of a complete and systematic account of Roman Criminal Law in its principles, method, and action, but only, while keeping a continuous thread of principle and historic development, to concentrate on certain of the problems strewn thickly over the field which called more urgently for solution. Pelham and Greenidge, the contemporary and younger colleague in this study as pursued at Oxford, on whom he relied most for aid or advice, were both dead before he completed his work; and to the memory of Greenidge, whose death removed a brilliant and masterly mind, *rerum Romanarum peritissimi*, he dedicated it in a few graceful words.

It won recognition, not only in England but on the Continent, as a contribution of high value towards the elucidation of a subject as obscure and complex as it is fascinating. Its combination of German thoroughness with French lucidity and with a candid modesty, an absence of dogmatism, which was his own, places it in a high rank. 'It is a piece of work', wrote the Regius Professor of Law at Cambridge, 'of a very high order of excellence, a book of which any scholar might be proud': and such was the general testimony of experts. If it be true, as was concluded by one of the ablest of his critics, 'that valid objections may often be urged against his conclusions, and that it seems unlikely that some of the problems discussed by him will ever be solved,' it is no less true that his treatment of the problems themselves, his exhaustive review and judi-

cious estimate of the evidence, supply a stimulus and a model for future research. And without any marked grace of style, without sparkling epigrams or flowers of rhetoric, he produced a work on a highly technical subject which may be read by others than specialists not only with profit but with interest and pleasure. The reception with which it met was a great satisfaction to him; and most of all, for it was the last thing that gave him pleasure, the degree of D.C.L. which the University, 'in honouring you honouring itself', as one of his pupils wrote, conferred on him by decree only a fortnight before his death. The honour was given in express recognition of this work. 'I do not believe', wrote an eminent lawyer in giving his cordial assent to the proposal, 'there is any University in Europe which would hesitate to give its highest degree in law on the strength of such a work.' But the unanimity with which its proposal was received by Council was based on a further sense of his many high services to Oxford and the Commonwealth of Letters.

Courthope wrote to him with a personal touch of pathos: 'I have been reading your volumes with great pleasure, and they have brought yourself before me at every page. We of the sixties are now a sadly dwindled band, and we both of us miss our dear old friend of Headington Hill to an extent that cannot be described.' Another old friend, Horace White, then in his seventy-ninth year, wrote enthusiastically from New York, 'after reading the whole book slowly and carefully and enjoying every word of it,' that in his opinion no new book would be needed on the subject in the next fifty years. And Lord Bryce, then Ambassador at Washington, was equally warm in his

appreciation, giving special praise to Strachan's sense of the Roman legal spirit, and his avoidance of the tendency 'common among our German friends, even the best of them', to push hypotheses too far and twist authorities to support them, and calling his attention to Icelandic Law as furnishing some of the best, but least known, parallels to Roman rules.

The autumnal touch is very marked in a letter written a year later to Mr. Slack.

Balliol College,
Oxford.

20 October, 1913.

MY DEAR ROBERT,

A magnificent parcel of beautiful flannels has arrived which can only be from you. They don't make such things elsewhere. I accept them as a birthday present for the completion the day after to-morrow of my seventieth year. This splendid new batch should see me through what remains of life for me. Very many thanks, my dear fellow. The affection which you and Maud have given me in continuation of that so plentifully bestowed by your dear father, is a very precious possession.

There is no better tidings of Dal [his younger brother, who died soon afterwards]: we can only wait in patience for what I fear we must now both look on as an inevitable end. He is very good and brave.

Good-bye, my dear Robert, and God bless you and yours.

Your affectionate,

J. L. STRACHAN-DAVIDSON.

Public affairs were what weighed on him most in the months that followed. 'I am sorry', he wrote in March 1914, 'that I am prevented from signing Lord Milner's manifesto about a dissolution; but I have always preached to my colleagues that they should

refrain from taking part in contentious proceedings, and I am bound to practice what I preach.'

'The world seems to have gone mad,' he wrote to Mrs. Slack a month later, 'and one fears that the *prius dementat* is only leading up to the *quem deus vult perdere*. Anson, who is not generally a pessimist, thinks that it will take a hundred years to set things right again. I have said so often "it is quite impossible that they can do that", and then they have done it, that now I put no limits to the folly of statesmen.

'So much for this melancholy subject. Now for your delightful post card from Ravello. I don't know how I never came to enthuse about it to you. "Here every prospect pleases and only man is vile." My friend Lacaita, who owns Palazzo Rufalo, will not live there, though he delights in his 'colonia', that is to say, the migratory olive-picking peasants of his Taranto estate. I wish I had known that you were going to Ravello, that I might have told Robert (it would be quite out of your reach) to climb the opposite hill to the castle of Scala—the most gradely place I have ever seen, there is a theatre of sloping rocks overhanging a precipice where George said he was sure the ghosts came out to sit at night. Waterhouse, the architect, took one look at it and then hid his face and rushed away in horror. Capri used to be delightful; but they say that Germany has flowed unto it. I hope that you did not find it quite spoiled.'

In May the sixty-fifth and, as it turned out, the last meeting of the Ambarum Club was held at Oxford, and he was their host at Balliol. Since its institution, thirty-four years before, he had very seldom failed to be present at its meetings, whether at Oxford or at Cambridge, twice in each year. The Oxford dinners were, except two at Christ Church in early days, always in Balliol Common Room. The Oxford secretaries were Henry Butcher until he left Oxford for Edinburgh in 1882; then R. L. Nettleship until his death in 1892;

then Willert until 1909 ; and afterwards P. E. Matheson for the rest of the Club's life. Its meetings were regarded during the earlier years of the war as suspended only ; and a few members in fact met and dined at Magdalen, in a ghostly fashion, in 1917 ; then it was agreed to dissolve the Club, which could never have been effectively got together again. It belonged to the past world. Of those who dined on this occasion only a few belonged to the Old Guard, but the complete list of names is not without interest. The Oxford members present were, besides himself : H. A. L. Fisher, C. C. Lacaita, A. Liddell, J. W. Mackail, P. E. Matheson, J. A. Smith, R. G. Tatton, S. H. Vines ; those belonging to Cambridge were Gerald Balfour, H. S. Foxwell, J. N. Langley, W. Leaf, Lord Lytton, Lord Monteagle, G. W. Prothero, O. Seaman, and Lord Tennyson. As too often happened in the second week of May, the regular time of the so-called Summer meeting of the Club, the weather was grey and bitterly cold. But it was a delightful evening, alike for host and guests.

Anson died a month later ; no one, perhaps, was then left with whom he had so much in common from length of intimacy and from that great bond of union, *idem sentire de re publica*.

The Gaudy on the 26th of June took place under the old conditions. Sir Edward Grey was the chief guest and made a speech which was recollected afterwards as particularly fine and impressive, though no one there anticipated the events of a month later and the part he played in them. Strachan himself had for some years left the toast of 'The Guests' in A. L. Smith's capable hands, and his own speech was short.

One of the events of the term had been the opening of the new 'Periham' block of rooms. When it had first been proposed, two years earlier, Strachan had deprecated it. What would happen, he urged, if there were a European war, and the College were depleted? The argument was received with incredulous amusement then. But—so strangely do events turn out—the additional accommodation provided by it was of the greatest service when the war *did* come and the College *was* depleted: and not less so when it filled up again and resumed its normal life years later, at a time when any fresh building would have been impossible.

On the 6th of July he was at the last of the Balliol dinners in London which had been started by a group of his own contemporaries in 1867, and were held annually in the week of the Oxford and Cambridge match. There had been, from first to last, forty-three members of this Society; they had then gradually dwindled to twenty, the youngest of whom was on the verge of seventy; and it was resolved on this occasion that in 1915 the Society should be dissolved and the dinners cease to be held. But before then the war had made it die a natural death.

He had been staying in College himself that July, and after the declaration of war he remained on the spot for most of the Long Vacation. Harold Hartley was living with him for two months. He was himself very fully occupied in drafting emergency statutes for the College, and in giving letters of recommendation for commissions; this he would never do until he had fully satisfied himself, by stringent inquiry, of a man's fitness to be an officer. To do a personal kindness, at whatever inconvenience, was a chance that he never

missed, and less so than ever, if possible, now. He was constant in his delicate attention to wounded men who were in the military hospital at Somerville. One of his colleagues, who was in the Acland Home for about two months in 1915 after a bad operation, tells me that he used to come and see him nearly every day, and to bring books, chosen with great tact and insight. Much less pleasant, but patiently accepted by him as a duty, was the housing, during the earlier months of the war, of Belgian refugees. Most of these were soon drafted off to other quarters; but one, who insisted on remaining with him for some months and in refusing to speak English, though he could do so well enough, was a sore trial, and almost wore him out. At last he suddenly departed, and never sent a word of thanks, 'though Strachan', I am assured, and one would be certain without assurance, 'had been perfectly angelic to him all the time.'

The active work of putting the College on a war-footing fell mainly on his colleagues, but all their action had his warm support. Only about fifty undergraduates were left; and that number gradually dwindled away to a mere handful. During the autumn and winter of 1914-15 the College was mainly used as a billeting-place for Territorials passing through. Its regular occupation, which continued throughout the war, as part of a training school for officers under one system or another, began in January 1915. The Master used always to say a few words of welcome in the Hall to each new batch of men who came; and the words were much appreciated and the welcome even more.

The majority of the Fellows and Tutors were also

on War service, military or civil, from an early time. Only three remained at regular College work; and Strachan took over as much of that as he could. Both the College chaplains went almost at once to be chaplains to the forces in France; and the Master took the Chapel services on week-days himself; for Sundays, clergymen from outside had to be got in. One of these, Mr. Fitzgerald, provided a crowning instance of Strachan's inability to remember names. He could never get nearer it than 'Kirkpatrick', and finally, for simplicity's sake, Kirkpatrick became the name by which he was known throughout the College.

Balliol, like the whole of Oxford, emptied itself into the army. The toll of life taken from the flower of England was from the first heavy. Every death was to the Master like the death of a child of his own: grievous and yet glorious, to be borne with fortitude, even if possible with cheerfulness, but shattering. The Roll of Honour, posted in the Chapel passage—where it is now replaced by a permanent record in bronze—opened with the name of J. N. Manners, killed in action at Villers Cotterets on the 1st of September. Six more names had to be added before the end of the year; and in 1915, fifty-seven. He wrote them in with his own hand, one might almost say in his heart's blood. The last entry was made by him only a few days before his own death. The special prayer in time of war, made part of the daily Chapel Service early in 1915, was written by him, and may be given here. It is best given without comment. *Qui sponte obtulistis animas vestras ad periculum, benedicite Domino.*

O God with whom do live the Spirits of just men made perfect, we give thee thanks for our brethren the members of

this College who have willingly offered themselves and have laid down their lives for us and for our country and for the liberty of the world. Give us grace to follow their good example, that we may never lose heart but may bear with patience and courage, as these have done, whatever Thy providence calls upon us to endure. Comfort the bereaved, and grant to all of us that our afflictions may purify our hearts and minds to Thy glory. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

To single out names in the long tragic list is no part of this memoir. But the death of Robert Gibson, Captain in the King's Own Scottish Borderers, killed in action at Hill 60 on the 5th of May 1915, was a specially profound grief. Gibson had been elected Tutorial Fellow in 1911, to fill the place vacated by J. A. Smith on his appointment as Waynflete Professor of Moral Philosophy; the relations between him and the Master were of more than usual cordiality and affection.

Hardly less of a blow was the death a little later of Douglas Radcliffe, killed in action near Hooze on the 30th of July. He had been one of those Etonians in whom the national character is at its highest, and on whom as an element in the life of the College Strachan set so much store; and he was a man in all respects after Strachan's own heart. Even as an undergraduate 'he put his College always first, himself always last'. 'Of quite unusual intellectual capacity, of firm and determined character, independent views, open mind, a high standard of behaviour, there was one person he never really cared about or thought much of—himself. He was the best of companions. Never was a man less dull or academic in thought or in talk; he brimmed

with humour, he loved all things pleasant, enjoyed life whole-heartedly, and stood for all that was good and true.' These words, written of him after his death by an intimate friend and contemporary, are quoted here because they give a picture not only of Strachan's ideal for members of the College, but—with allowance made for all the difference between a man of splendid physique and one whose health was throughout life very delicate—of the Master's own character and of the recognition and affection which it inspired.

The Master would have wished, too, that another name were mentioned here: that of D. R. (Bob) Brandt, of the year intermediate between Radcliffe and Gibson; a fine scholar and athlete—he kept wicket for Oxford in 1907—a penetrating mind and a nimble wit, 'like a greyhound in the slips', and a keen soldier even before the war. He only went to France in May 1915, and less than two months later fell on the parapet of a German trench in the Ypres salient, in the act of cheering on his men.

Douglas Radcliffe's sister, now Lady Gorell, was in Oxford a good while during that summer, taking charge of a friend's children in their mother's enforced absence. Every day, as she remembers, the Master would look in to ask if there were any news of her brother. He had not always much to say: 'I think we'll have pussy in' he would observe after a silence. But he radiated sympathy.

In the first week of January he had lost another stay of his life. Mary Talbot, the friend and counsellor of many years, died after a long and painful illness. He had relied on her advice and guidance more perhaps than on those of any single person since Abbott's

death. She was a woman conspicuous alike for intelligence and character; best known perhaps by her admirable pioneering work, from 1875 onwards, in improving the status and furthering the well-being of girl and women shop-assistants. But she was also a good scholar; Strachan always used to go to her—so he told Mrs. Green—for criticism on any Latin composition of his own; and what is still more remarkable, she read the whole of the two volumes of *Problems of the Roman Criminal Law* in MS. before it went to press. By her own wish, her name was not mentioned in the preface; but there is no reason now why her help—it might almost be said, her co-operation—should not be made known.

‘I have a telegram’, he wrote that day to Mr. Slack, ‘to say that our dear Mary was taken from us in her sleep early this morning. I am thankful that there was no struggle with death at the end, for the accounts for the last fortnight have been most distressing. I went to Clifton for a few days a fortnight ago, and sat with her for an hour several times. She was then well enough to enjoy conversation. At this moment I feel as if there was not such another left on earth. It will be a great blow to you too, and to Maud and Ethel; this sorrow binds us all in sympathy. I know that you would welcome me to your home in this time of sorrow, but I think that I am better alone.’

Apart from the heavy task of putting the College on a war footing for an indefinite time, there were particular cases which called for firm and prompt, as well as delicate handling. Two Indian undergraduates, both Bengalis, were suspected of disloyalty. Conference and confidential interchange of views had to be conducted between the University and the India Office

on many questions arising out of war service of Indian Civil Service candidates and probationers, and this all fell as a matter of course into his hands. The retention of a nucleus staff of Fellows was a problem requiring constant readjustment to changing circumstances. The College finance, even with the relief given by the Emergency Powers Act of 1915, was a matter of much anxiety. Provisions had to be made which would be applicable either to a state of war going on for years, or to its early conclusion, which during 1915 still might be, and by many was, considered to be probable.

Strachan put a brave face on it: he never showed discouragement or countenanced fault-finding. In June he joined other Heads of Colleges in signing a letter to *The Times* urging that Parliament should immediately fix a definite day on and after which every citizen in Great Britain should be placed under orders, and 'national service be established for the home, the workshop, and the fighting line'. Meanwhile he forced himself, as a sedative or fortifying influence, to pursue daily work at Roman history and constitutional law. He spent a good deal of the time, that hung so heavily on the hands of those who had to 'stand by', in research at the Bodleian into obscure corners of the subject; there is, for instance, a note made by him of four consecutive days there in November devoted to reading and taking notes from a German work on the Glossaries which go under the names of Philoxenus and Cyrillus; and some fragments of correspondence with Professor H. Goudy, Mr. W. M. Geldart, and others on points of legal history or interpretation. He finished a first rough draft of a long essay on Magisterial Power in Roman Procedure. He had two other

historico-constitutional essays in hand, one on the period of the early Roman Empire, the other, which might finally have been incorporated with it, on the life and character of Tiberius. These fragments are not in a condition which makes publication desirable.

No picture of Strachan, whether as Dean or as Master, would be complete which did not take account of the cordial relations between him and the College servants, not only those with whom he came more particularly into daily contact. They were also to him in some sense members of the family; and the old adage that 'service is no inheritance' did not apply. Of several, he would have wished mention made here, and the mention will be no less welcome to past and present Balliol men. Of Ezra Hancock first of all, one of the institutions of the College, a word must be said. First as messenger and then as under-porter in charge of the back gate, he had proved his zeal and capacity, and had become a familiar friend to us all, long before his promotion to the responsible and sometimes delicate duties of porter in 1891. He held that office for twenty-three years, with universal satisfaction. His tact, his helpfulness, his unfailing memory (for he never forgot a name or a face or a message) were added to the kindest of natures; and his death soon after the beginning of the War was a real grief as well as a heavy loss. The welcome one always received from him, his inquiries after one's family, the obvious pleasure in his greeting, are among the pleasant memories of generations of Balliol men. But all that can be said of him has been said to perfection in the verses by Ronald Knox which were printed after Hancock's death in the *Oxford Magazine*, under the

motto *Beatus ille servus quem quum venerit Dominus eius, invenerit sic facientem.* They gave Strachan very great pleasure :

The ready hand, the deferential speech
 We knew and loved, the eye with welcome lit—
 Was Peter's self more cognizant of each,
 More stern to exclude, more gracious to admit ?
 'Ask Hancock' was our only common creed
 In Balliol, and although we left your care,
 We knew that threshold held a friend indeed,
 Our first impression, our last memory there ;
 Till that grim Guest, whose coming all men wait,
 Not with belated reveller's blustering din,
 But knocking gently, called you to the Gate :
 And you stepped back, and smiling let him in.

At Hancock's funeral there was a large gathering of old Balliol men ; it was the last of such gatherings at which Strachan was present.

Long also, though less long than with Hancock, was his connexion with two others who, while I write, are still servants of the College. Henry Burley came to Balliol in 1885, at Strachan's instance, to take charge of the Senior Common Room ; he had been in Sir W. Anson's service for a good many years before then, and they already knew each other well. Strachan had then become Steward of Common Room, an office which he held until he became Master, so that for more than twenty years they were in daily touch. 'He was always ready', Mr. Burley writes, 'with a kind word and a helping hand in anything that concerned the carrying out of my duties.' 'When any of the undergraduates', he adds, 'had permission to use

the old Common Room for any purpose his instructions to me were always given with the same injunction: "Make them comfortable"; and goes on, in words which are exceedingly true, 'He was most unconventional in his habits, but never forgot the strict etiquette of a master and gentleman.'

A word, too, should be said about his household as Master, for it was a pattern of devotion and harmony. James Clarke, who had been his servant in his rooms, came with him to the Master's lodgings as butler and valet, and took great care of him both there and when in later years it was desirable that he should travel with a personal attendant. Mrs. Willcocks, as cook and housekeeper, and Miss Lodge as parlour-maid, were also with him throughout his Mastership, and gave equally devoted, capable, and affectionate service. Nor should another member of the family, as he might almost be called, be forgotten; Mrs. Willcocks's cat, a noble creature, who had a warm place in the Master's heart.

A nature so fine, so modest, so delicately-tempered as his does not lend itself easily to description, or supply a fund of anecdote. It is singular how many of his friends and pupils profess themselves unable to give any definite reminiscences and fall back on words of affectionate admiration. And this is indeed what remains for the present writer from a friendship which was warm and deep, on both sides, for nearly forty years. One of his pupils writes—and in substance this is what most of them say—"I was 'under the spell' of Strachan and was completely devoted to him, and yet I find it difficult to make a picture of him which quite accounts for the feeling he

inspired. I don't seem able to remember any of his sayings or doings which seem in any way remarkable.'

I am glad to be allowed to quote here a note contributed by Mr. Lawrence Jones, for it comes very near the heart of the matter. He came up from Eton to Balliol in 1904, and Strachan, until he was elected Master, was his Tutor.

'Considering the deep and lasting impression that Strachan-Davidson made upon those of us who were undergraduates during his Mastership, it is singular how little one remembers of his actual sayings or doings. Perhaps this is because Strachan was in the highest degree an example of the rather hackneyed truth that it is what a man is, and not what he does, that matters. Almost the only actual saying of his which, for some reason or other, has stuck in my head, is perhaps not out of place in this connexion. There had been a discussion of the old question of whether brains or character carry a man the farther, and the Master said: "When I was a young man I thought there was nothing like brains, but in later life I came to believe that character was far more important; now, however, that I am old, I am quite sure that what matters most to a man is neither brains nor character, but temperament."

'Certainly, in Strachan's own case, it is the way people and things affected him, rather than his own activities, which one remembers. His courtesy, for instance. No undergraduate could fail to be won by the experience of going to see Strachan in his rooms, and of being made to feel, to his own surprise, that he was a person of importance and consideration. Not that Strachan put himself out in the least, but in some subtle way he, in his own rooms, was always a host, his undergraduate visitor always a considered guest. One used to go away an inch taller for nothing but the manner of one's reception, and it is certain that this was no thought-out policy of Strachan—he simply couldn't help it. He was temperamentally courteous

and civil-minded, and felt an instinctive respect—the corollary of his own perfect self-respect—for any fellow being, however humble.

‘ This attitude of Strachan’s to undergraduates didn’t in the least affect the great difficulty he always had in knowing them apart. Names were always a stumbling-block to him. Half of us were never more than “ Mr—er—er ”. He used to mark his College list with descriptive notes—“ Little black dog ” for one, “ Teapot ” for another.

‘ The Master was very much a man of the world. He never scolded or lectured. Breaches of College discipline were treated as breaches of good taste or manners—he made the offender feel he had outraged the etiquette of a good club. A man from another College came into Balliol one night and broke up a good deal of crockery and furniture. The account for breakages was sent in to his host. The host, who had taken no part in the rowdiness, felt rather aggrieved and wrote to the Master to explain. “ Dear Mr. H., ” replied Strachan, “ there ’s an old saying, that he who keeps a monkey must pay for what the monkey breaks.”

‘ He was most accessible. Any undergraduate might stop him in the Quad, or seek him in his rooms at night. Strachan would offer tobacco from his enormous pouch, and pour out a cup of tea. He did not mind being discovered with a novel, or with his waistcoat unbuttoned. I think it would have been impossible for Strachan to appear undignified in any circumstances whatever. His perfect simplicity and natural ease made him independent of such things as attire or posture. He liked easy conversation on small topics, or could be silent without embarrassment to himself or to his companion.

‘ A little girl once went for a walk with the present Archbishop of Canterbury. “ What did you talk about ? ” asked her mother. “ Oh, he talked to me as if I had been another Archbishop.” Strachan habitually talked to us as if we had been another Master of Balliol.

‘ Perhaps that was the great secret of his influence. He made us feel men of the world in the best sense. He gave us

something to live up to—the standard of good sense, simplicity and right feeling which, by his address, he assumed us to possess.

‘As a teacher, his scope was limited and his effectiveness perhaps not very great. Few undergraduates could share his enthusiasm for ‘Bruns’ or for nice points of Roman law. The same assumption that we could and did share his outlook and standards, so stimulating out of lecture hours, rather clogged his teaching. What he did and could do was to give one a feeling of the humanity and reality of Roman history. Cicero was a friend of his of whom he loved to talk. But even in this he was not comparable with, for example, his own great friend Warde Fowler.

‘He gave one the impression that his own range of study was deep rather than very wide. So with English literature his talk, his examples, his quotations, his reminders, were almost invariably of a limited number of ‘classics’—Shakespeare, Fielding, Dickens—not Meredith, or Pater, or Hardy. But on this point my impression may be quite at sea.

‘I don’t remember ever hearing him talk about religion or philosophy. If he was ever in speculative vein, it was not with undergraduates, and one felt in him a deep reserve on religious subjects. He loved to talk of men he had known, of Abbott and Green most of all—but of their personal sides.

‘He kept in touch with undergraduate affairs—the rowing and so on, and congratulated us on our successes, but with a due sense of proportion in such things. In talking to Strachan one felt a little too old and sensible to be unduly emphatic about athletics. To have the usual out of door accomplishments of an English gentleman was one thing, purely athletic distinction quite another.

‘Strachan had very fine manners towards women—who in turn had, I think, a special appreciation of his sensitive and discriminating mind. His sister-in-law, “the little Madam”, as he called her, usually acted as hostess for him when he entertained in the Master’s lodgings, and not even a self-conscious undergraduate guest could fail to notice and be

charmed by Strachan's attentive concern for her, and the way he unobtrusively drew her, somewhat shy and retiring as she was, into the centre of the talk. His own lack of self-consciousness made it easy for women to minister to his wants, and I have seen him submit without the least embarrassment to being draped in a shawl or a tartan rug—an attention most men would have heartily disliked.

'His physical delicacy, his fine features, and the grace of his manners, together with his sensitive perceptions and great power of sympathy, might have given a casual acquaintance an impression of an almost feminine personality. But this was by no means a true impression. Strachan had a robust mind and outlook, with no trace of squeamishness. He had plenty of determination, and in getting his way could use finesse—I have even heard it called, by an affectionate opponent over some College business, cunning.'

The winter of 1915-16 wore drearily through. In March 1916 the College was almost completely occupied by the sixth Officer-Cadet Battalion; the officers of the Battalion who were quartered there being made members of the Senior Common Room. The Master was in normal health and spirits, going to the Bodleian a good deal, and occupied also with the intricacies of the war-finances of the College. Together with the whole body of the Fellows and Tutors, he had relinquished twenty-five per cent. of his stipend. A memorandum of the 20th of March 1916, probably the last serious business which he dealt with, showed a small credit balance on the College accounts for 1915 instead of the large deficit which had been anticipated. On Monday, the 27th of March, the weather was very wet and cold, with a tempest of sleet all night. He was quite bright that evening. Pickard-Cambridge, who was with him until pretty late discussing various

College matters, left him, seemingly better than he had been for some weeks before, without any apprehensions. Early on Tuesday morning he rang for his man Clarke. When Clarke came, he found him confused and 'not under control'. Dr. Collier was fetched at once; when he arrived the Master was unconscious, and remained so until he died a few hours later. The immediate cause of death was cerebral hemorrhage, brought on by arterial sclerosis.

The funeral, on Friday the 31st, was very quiet. The Chapel service was conducted by Dr. Gore, Bishop of Oxford, a former Scholar of the College; Canon Sanday, who, entering at Balliol with Strachan, had begun, before he migrated a year later to Corpus, the intimate friendship which continued unbroken thereafter; and H. T. Bowlby, the Head Master of Lancing, one of Strachan's best-loved pupils. Then a sad little procession passed from Balliol to Holywell Cemetery for the interment. Spring was in the mild air: quiet sorrow and thankfulness in the hearts of those who stood by. It was those who were dying young who absorbed all keener pain.

The grave is marked by a Celtic cross of grey granite, put up by his relatives, with a simple inscription: 'In loving memory of James Leigh Strachan-Davidson, D.C.L., Master of Balliol College 1907-1916, eldest son of the late James Strachan-Davidson of Ardgath, Perthshire, who died March 28th, 1916, aged 72 years. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."' More recently, a bronze commemorative tablet has been placed in Balliol Chapel with a Latin inscription which briefly sums up his life and character. It runs as follows:

HOC AERE COMMEMORATUR IACOBUS LEIGH STRACHAN-
 DAVIDSON ART. MAG. DOCTOR IN IUR. CIV. COLLEGII
 DE BALLIOLO EX ORDINE SCHOLARIS SOCIUS TUTOR
 DECANUS MAGISTER. HANC DOMUM SUAM, CUI PER LIV
 ANNOS TOTUM SE DEDICAVIT, DONIS LARGITER AUXIT
 HISTORIAE IURISQUE ROMANI PERITIA ILLUSTRAVIT
 SAGACI CONSILIO ADIUVIT ET REXIT. PIETATE INTEGR
 URBANITATE EXQUISITA PARITER INSIGNIS, AMICIS AMI-
 CISSIMUS, COLLEGIS DISCIPULISQUE UNICE DILECTUS, MOR-
 TEM OBIIT V KAL. APR. ANNO SALUTIS MDCXVI AETATIS
 LXXIII MAGISTERII IX.

More need not be said. *Quotiens magni alicuius
 viri mors ab historicis narrata est, totiens fere consum-
 matio totius vitae et quasi funebris laudatio redditur.*
 That is the practice of historians, and one often
 followed by biographers. But this memoir will have
 failed of its purpose if it requires any such adornment.
 Its aim has been the portraiture of a simple and
 beautiful nature, which is best left to make its own
 impression. That aim will have been reached in so
 far as it recalls to those who knew him, or transmits
 for their successors, something of a noble, gracious,
 and loved personality. 'We just had the feeling', so
 one of his pupils writes, 'that he was the greatest
 gentleman we had ever known.'

